THE ART OF DISPATCH

THE ART OF DISPATCH

CHAPTER 1

PREFACE

It would be cool for us to say that the art of *Dispatch* was some sort of singular vision we were all faithfully marching toward.

Everyone on this project knows that's bullshit.

The truth is, *Dispatch*'s aesthetic was discovered by a team who woke up every day and relentlessly solved problems. There were days when we'd struggle to make a location feel more specific or give a character the right vibe. There were days when we'd fight through the boredom of designing napkins. There were days when we'd question our life choices after debating the amount of pubic hair a monster should have.

At times it could feel like sailing through murk, but it's really where the magic happened and how we discovered our North Star as a team.

This book is the diary of that discovery we found together.

— Derek Stratton
Art Director

Cover page & concept art above by Lap Pun Cheung

We talked a lot about a "Western Anime" style for *Dispatch*, combining grounded, realistic character performances with elements of anime visuals. This shot was a perfect opportunity to take two of our main characters who are getting to know each other during a drunken, naturalistic conversation in a bar and pluck them out into the sky, revealing the skyline of downtown Los Angeles in a style reminiscent of Neo-Tokyo from *Akira*.

- Dennis Lenart
Episode 1 Co-Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 1

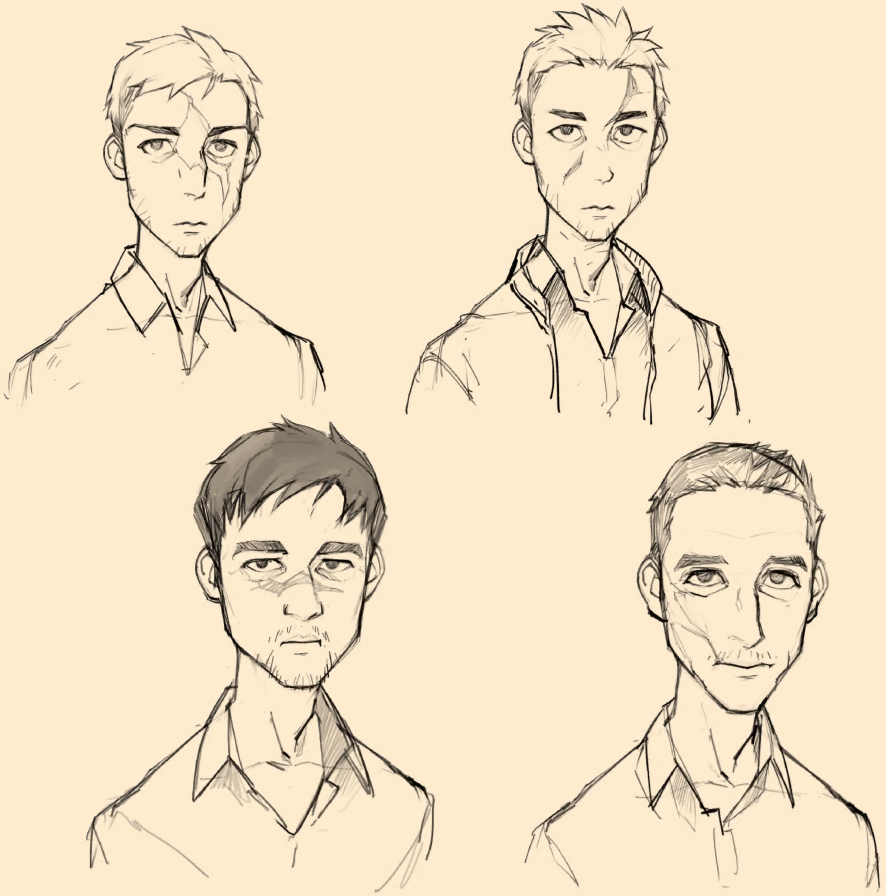
ROBERT ROBERTSON

(the third)

Our player character, Robert, is an everyman. You know, just a guy. Some might even call him a loser after his fall from grace. Always feeling like he's one step behind, he's a bit of a disheveled schlub, "washed-up dad bod" and all.

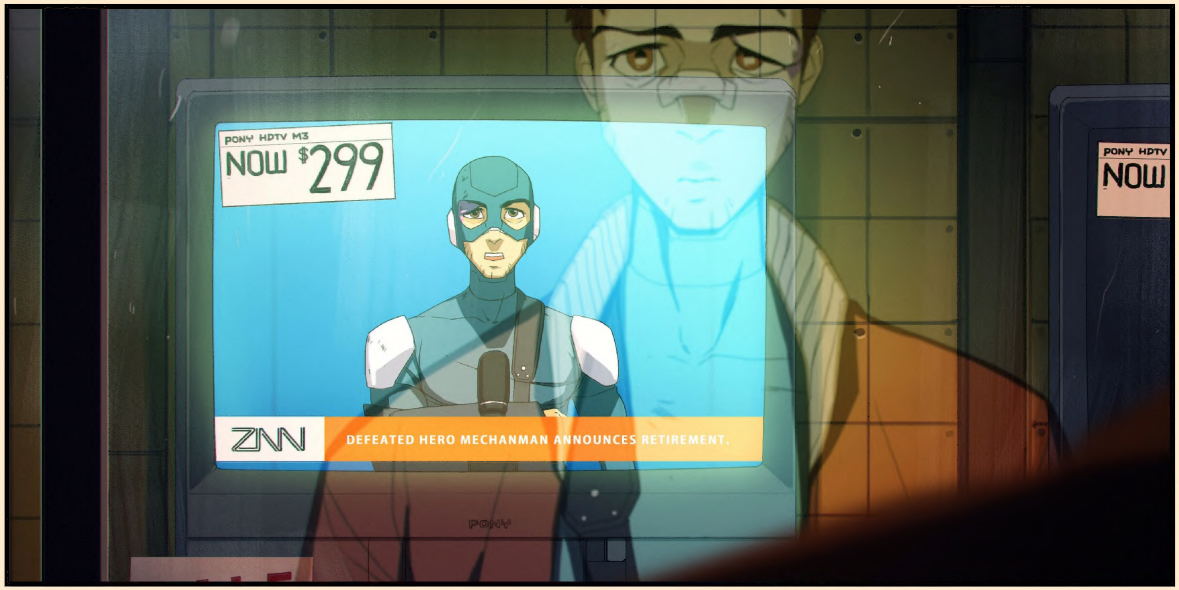
He's broken, he's beaten, and he's just trying to do his best.

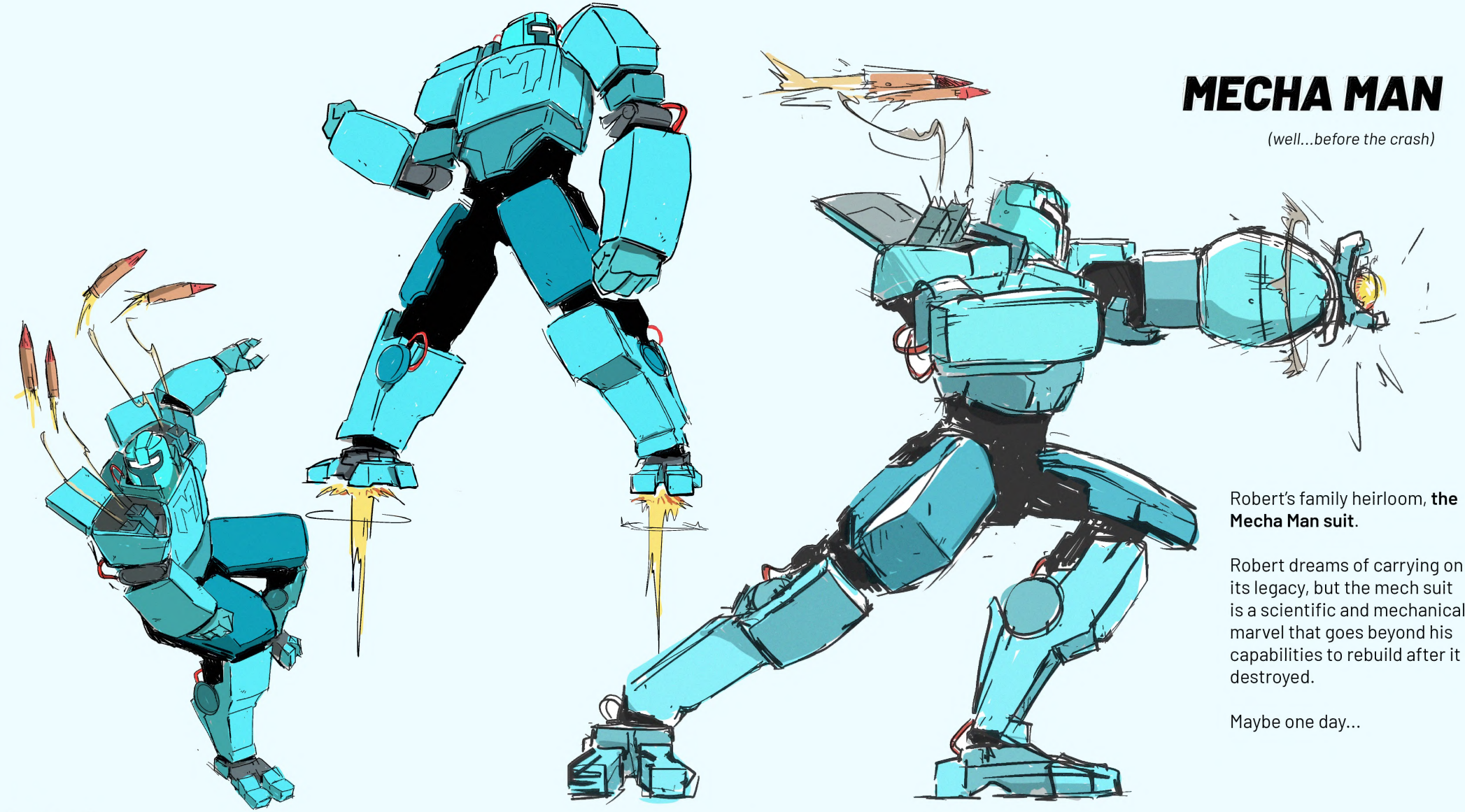
ABOVE: *Sketches by Jae Harm, Paige Irvine & Debra Rengga*
LEFT: *Tone piece & concept by Lap Pun Cheung*



The chunk missing from Robert's ear feels iconic now, but we explored a lot of more prominent and gnarly scar placements early on. Ultimately, we felt these scars were a bit harsh and too blunt in conveying his troubled past. Considering the origins of his scar got scoped out of the game, we're glad we didn't go with something so in-your-face.

Face/scar exploration & tone pieces by Lap Pun Cheung





MECHA MAN

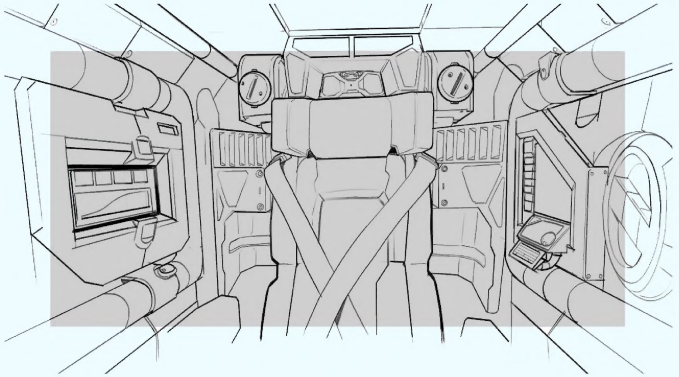
(well...before the crash)

Robert's family heirloom, **the Mecha Man suit**.

Robert dreams of carrying on its legacy, but the mech suit is a scientific and mechanical marvel that goes beyond his capabilities to rebuild after it is destroyed.

Maybe one day...

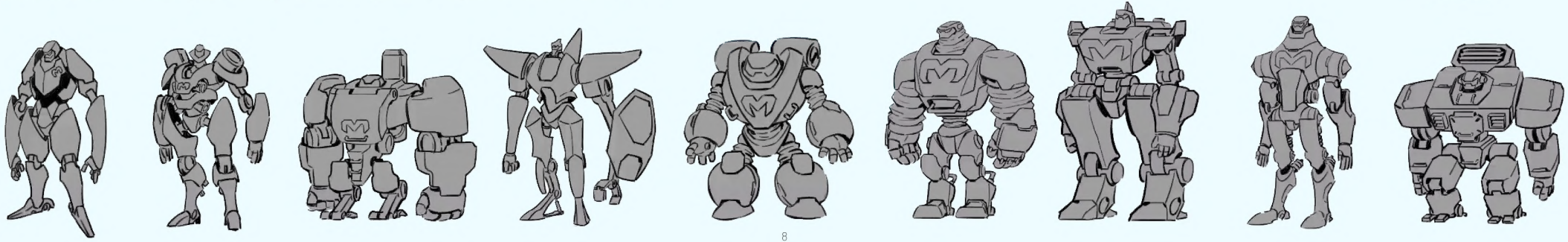
Concepts by Liz Chee



LEFT & BELOW: *Early cockpit sketches by jojaow & Tana.M*

ABOVE: *Robert in cockpit sketch by Liz Chee*

ABOVE: *Mech & mech suit concepts by Lap Pun Cheung* | ***BELOW:*** *Mech exploration by Thanyathon Srimahasarn, Fridea_18 & Tana.M*



Concept art by Derek Stratton

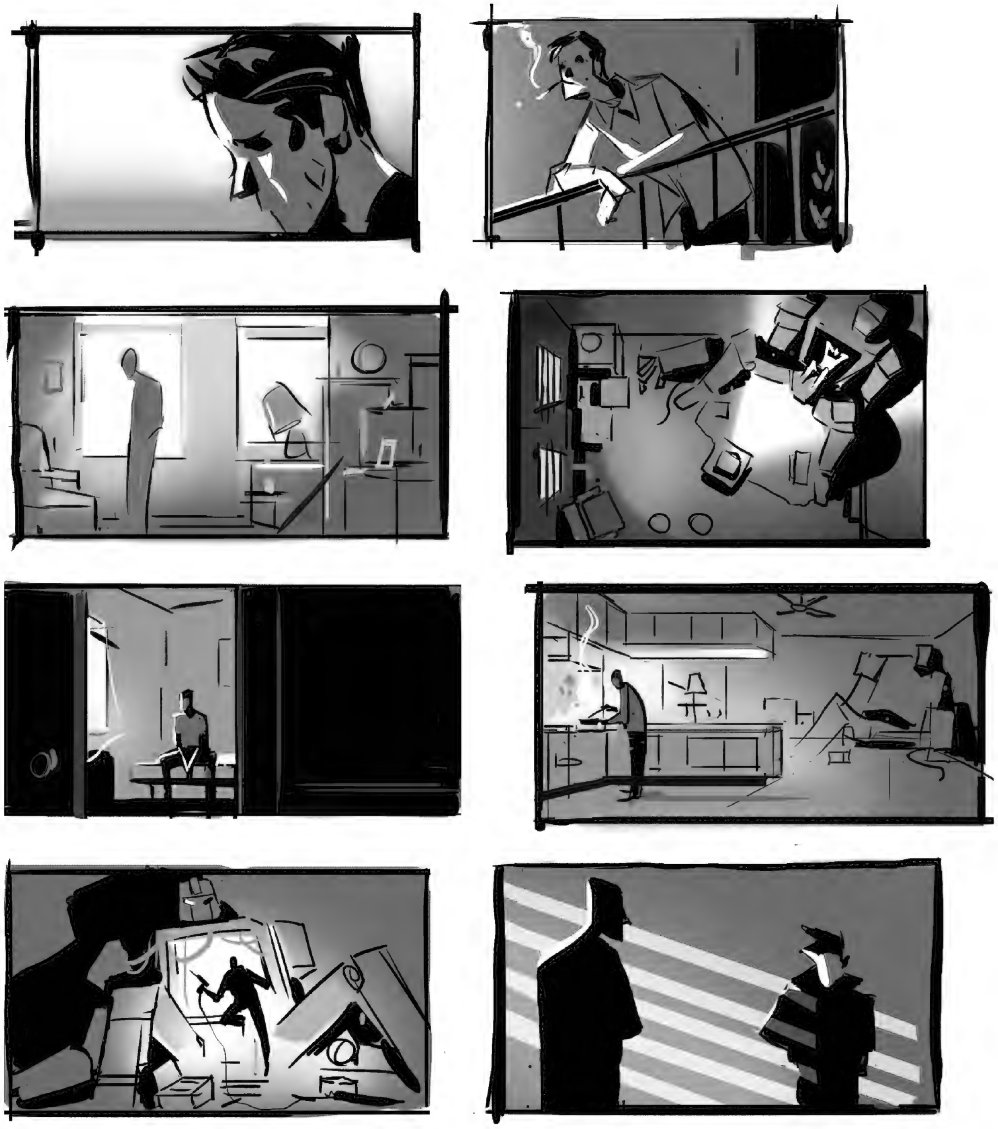
BEEF

The one. The only. The rotund.

There's not much more to know about Beef - he's a straight shooter, lets it all hang out. He's Robert's BFF and the BFF of anyone who gives him belly rubs. May we all live a life of beauty and simplicity like our best boy, Beef.

ABOVE: *Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung & model by Natpakhan Temrung*

ABOVE: *Episode 1 storyboards by Lance D. Lee*



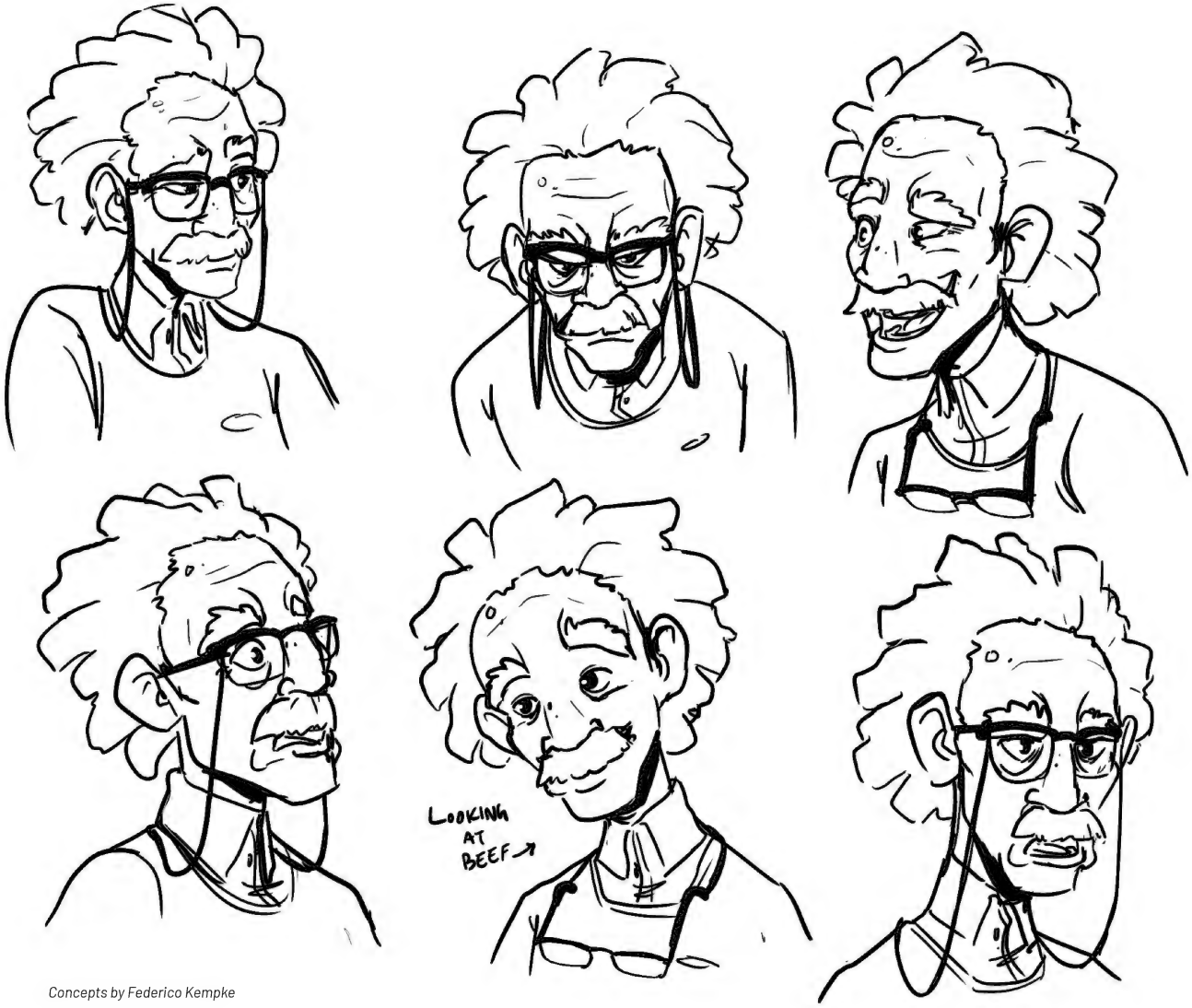
ROBERT'S APARTMENT

Robert's humble apartment is designed to look how he's feeling: like shit. Robert has sacrificed a lot to maintain the life of Mecha Man and his bare studio shows that all of his attention is focused on supporting the mech.

Part bachelor pad, part mech lab... it may be lacking in charm, warmth, and basic furnishings, but it's where Robert can focus on what matters most: Beef!

LEFT: *Derek Stratton* ***| RIGHT:*** *Liz Chee*

Robert's Apartment Exterior by Santasak Apasuthirat

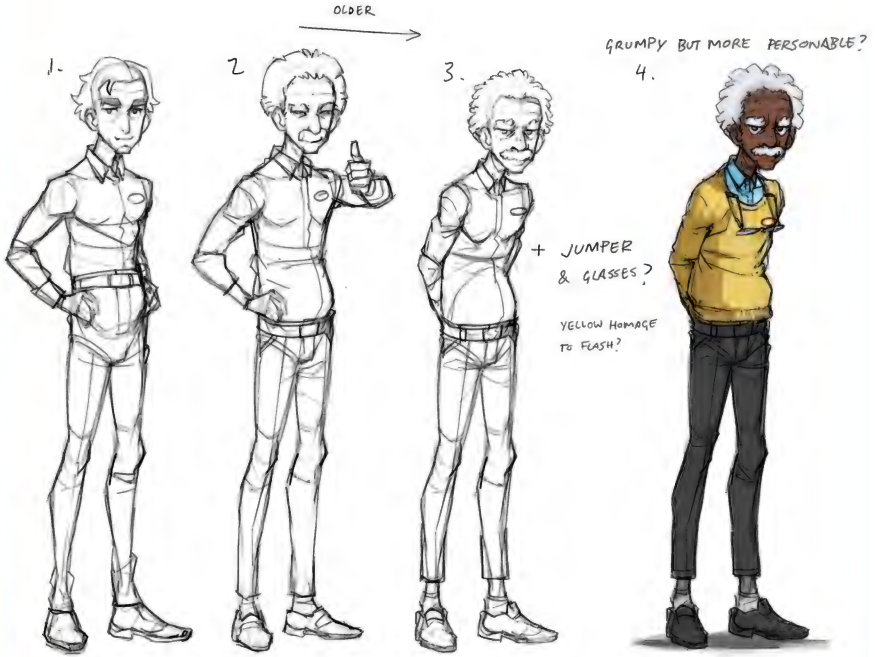


Concepts by Federico Kempke

CHASE / TRACKSTAR

Chase is one of our studio's favorite characters to write and animate: he's blunt, expressive, cantankerous and, like us all, has a weak spot for Beef. A bit of a crank, but you would be too if your mid-life crisis hit as hard as Chase's early-onset osteoporosis.

ABOVE: *Episode 2 storyboards by Debra Rengga*



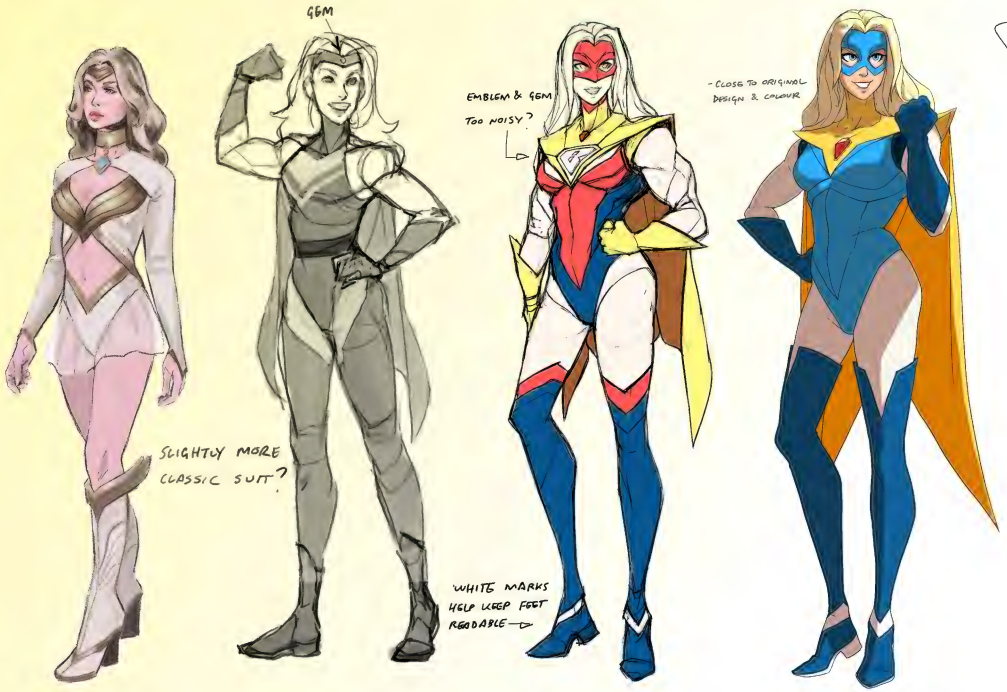
We knew early on that Chase's powers had the unfortunate side-effect of rapidly aging him, but we took care to explore how far that aging would have progressed (i.e. how much did Trackstar use his power). Moving at light-speed is the kind of juicy ability anyone would use and abuse happily, so we came to the conclusion that he'd be grayed, wrinkled and wobbly.

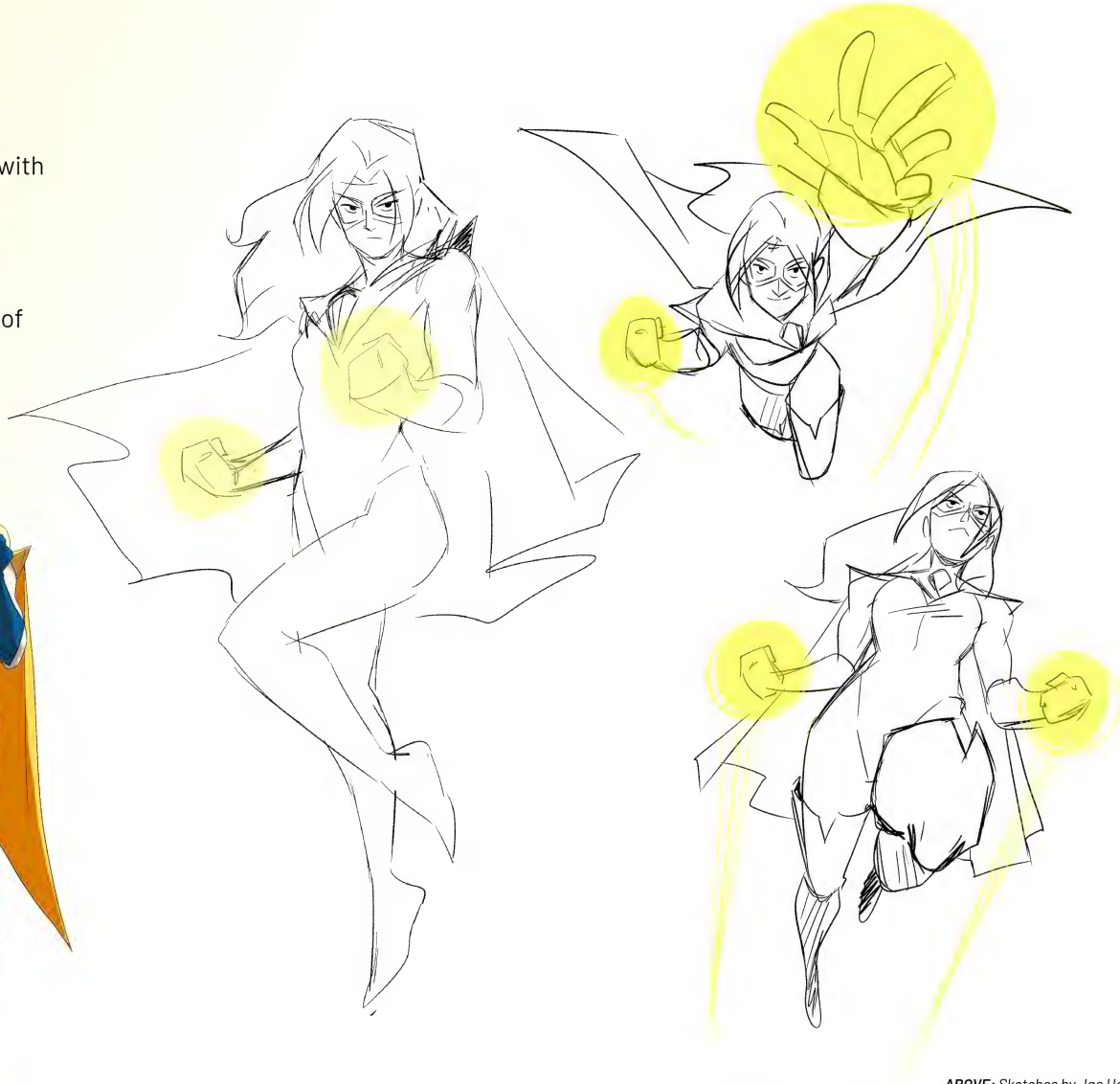
TOP CENTER: *Chase age exploration by Lap Pun Cheung*
LEFT: *Paige Irvine* | **ABOVE:** *Liz Chee*

BLONDE BLAZER

Blonde Blazer represents the golden-age of supers. She's honorably courageous with a generous spirit and a strong dose of corporate-approved dorkiness. An old soul looking to keep the business of heroism feeling fresh and personal.

Visually, we continually pushed her super persona further and further towards something that felt *classic*: clean lines, bold colors, obvious strength, and a dash of mystery and flair.





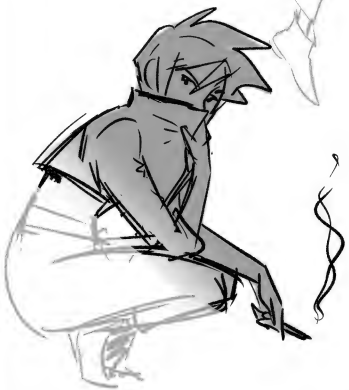
ABOVE: *Sketches by Jae Harm*
LEFT: *Design exploration by Alexandria Neonakis & Lap Pun Cheung*

ABOVE: *Sketches by Lance D. Lee*
RIGHT: *Stills from early animation test by Igloo Studio*

INVISIBITCH GAL

When we began to build out Invisigal, the piece on the far left was the first concept drawn. We then went on a long journey of tweaking Visi's character: her clothes, her tattoos & piercings, her powers, her attitude... Only to realize we still liked the original idea best. Classic game development.

Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung



LEFT: *Tone pieces by Lap Pun Cheung*
ABOVE: *Jae Harm* **|** ***RIGHT:*** *jojaow*

Gameplay splash image by kuchupack & Thanyathon Srimahasarn

THE SETTING: SDN OFFICE

The offices of SDN are inspired by the clean, mid-century lines of those nondescript office buildings your parents used to work in. We embraced funky aesthetics, nostalgic 90s tech and a more muted color palette with the intention to create something timeless... somehow both modern and retro.

Early SDN Building concept by Lap Pun Cheung

Call center interior explorations by Derek Stratton

BLAZER'S OFFICE

Some older, possibly-second hand furniture but a generally sophisticated and warm vibe. Soft and streamlined to balance the chaos of the action beyond her office door.

CONFERENCE ROOM

Functional and well-worn with mid-century touches. Not a private changing room.

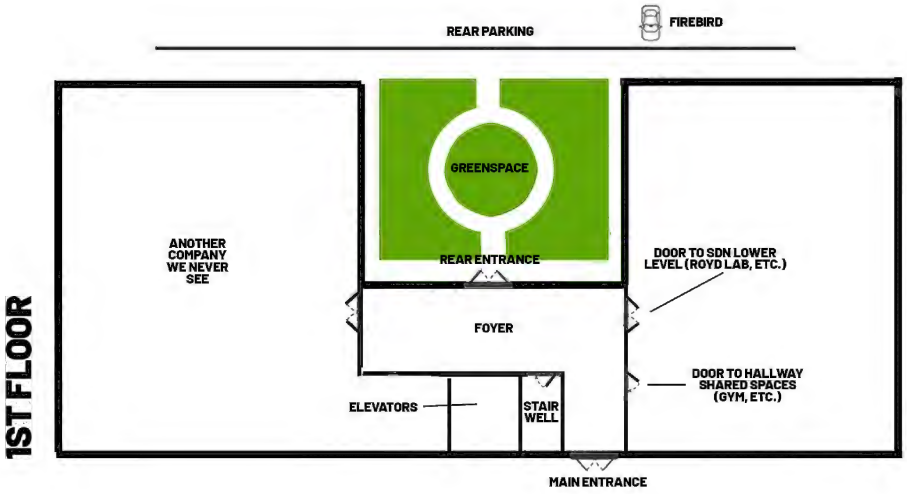
BATHROOM

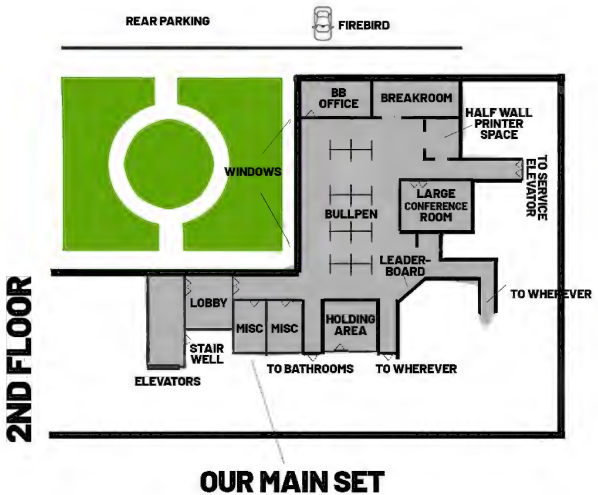
Nauseating lighting. Could be cleaner. Possible venue for bro fists. (Royd's urinal not pictured.)

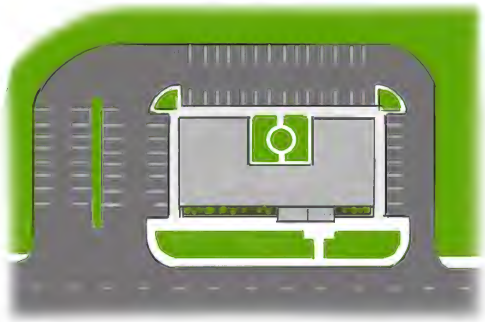
OFFICE LAYOUT

These floor plans were our go-to references for the SDN office's structural logic. Some of the areas pictured are never even seen during the game (seriously, what company occupies the space next door and is it weird sharing an elevator with a bunch of supers?)

Nevertheless, it was important to understand the big picture so as we designed the action of the office scenes, we could maintain the flow of the interiors and remain consistent within the confines of the established exterior.





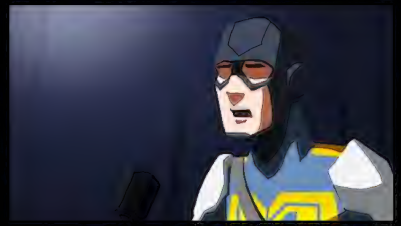
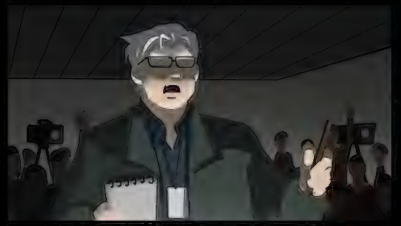
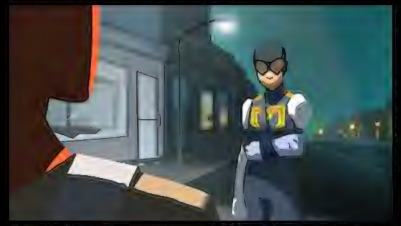


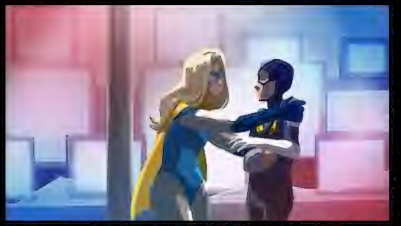
PARKING LAYOUT

It's easy for an office environment to feel soulless, and we knew that because Blonde Blazer was in charge of SDN's Torrance branch, its aesthetics would reflect back on the kind of person she is. With that in mind, Blazer's office is the heart of the building, where she keeps the overhead lights off and lets warm natural light flood the room. This shot was used to dial in the vibe with our 3 managers running their post-mortem. Weirdly, this shot is for a dialog choice, and not the main path, so only a third of players see this. We were still learning...

- Nick Herman
Episode 2 Co-Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 2



EPISODE ONE *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

EPISODE TWO *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

THE ART OF DISPATCH

CHAPTER 2

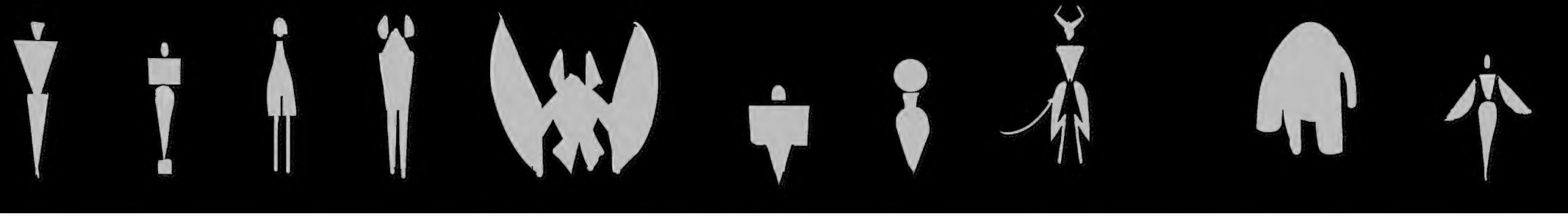
Game development is often challenging. It's full of compromises and sacrifices at every step of the way, but every time I see this scene it brings a smile to my face. I'll always remember it as one of those rare moments in time where we were all in perfect sync and everything seemed to fall into place. From script to voice acting, from storyboards to animation, from art to lighting and finally through sound and music production, every person that touched this scene helped make it better and better along the way. It's not the most dramatic scene in the game, or the funniest, or the flashiest, but this simple, quiet conversation on the swing set at night is the thing I'm the most proud of.

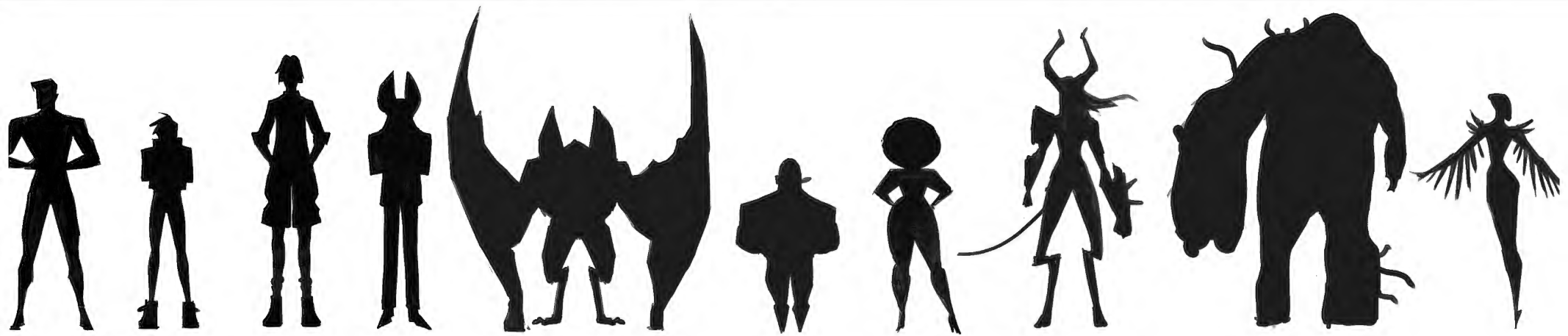
- Dennis Lenart
Episode 3 Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 3

THE PHOENIX PROGRAM

You've now had the chance to get to know the ~~villains~~heroes of the "Z-Team." You've also had to make some tough calls to reshape the team - the fates of Sonar, Coupé, Waterboy, and Phenomaman were in your hands. Let's take a closer look at how they got here.





Early Z-Team line-up silhouettes by Derek Stratton

ABOVE: *Jae Harm*
RIGHT: *Liz Chee*

SONAR

What makes a man? And what makes a bat man? We spent a long time trying to figure out just that. While walking the fine line between fanged, aerial mammal and crypto-obsessed tech bro, we landed on our bud, Sonar. He started off as a simple joke (what would a literal bat / man look like), but quickly became one of our favorite characters. A lot of time was spent trying to make sure his bat head didn't feel like a sports mascot costume and even more time spent debating how much hair he has underneath his clothes.

DIRECTLY RIGHT: *Design outcome sketch by Thanyathon Srimahasarn*

BLUE: *Sketches by Jae Harm*
BLACK: *Sketches by Liz Chee*

COUPÉ

Etymology: "to cut" in French (sadly ironic if you did snip her off the Z-Team roster.)

One of the few aerial heroes, and the Phoenix Program's only masked hero, Coupé is capable, elegant, and mysterious. The concept for her character came very early, but nailing down her final look took until almost the end of pre-production.

Sketches by Thanyathon Srimahasarn, Lih Liau and Jae Harm

Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung

WATERBOY

Sweet, timid, and hardworking. Waterboy awakens the dreamer in us all. What he lacks in skills, he makes up for in moisture and sometimes that actually comes in handy! Whether you chose him to fight on the front lines or left him to mop the bathroom, Waterboy will give it 110%.

FAR LEFT: *Sketch by Jae Harm* | ***ABOVE:*** *Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung*

Sketches by Kanako Iwata, Jae Harm & Lih Liau

PHENOMAMAN

Phenomaman was SDN's best and not-so brightest, but after being blindsided by a breakup, he's left purposeless. Listless. *Blazerless*.

If he was welcomed into the Phoenix Program, however, he may have found a new outlet to focus his (incredibly intense) yearnings and desires. **Phenomenal!**

Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung

Sketches by Jae Harm and kuchupack

ROYD

The best brah.

Originally conceived as a deployable character that was far more involved with the Z-Team's antics in the field, Royd was initially designed to have a transformative power that increased his size and strength. The idea of his close ties with the Phoenix Program was eventually scoped out of the game, so his powers were removed (aside from massive strength) in lieu of becoming Robert's trusty, brainy and friendly robotics man stationed in his very own secret lab in the basement of SDN.

ROYD'S LAB

Most of the Torrance SDN office is sporting some pretty archaic technology, but Royd's lab is an oasis for gear nuts. Behind multiple layers of security, he's hoarding a room full of high-end gadgets and a stockpile of confiscated weaponry from captured villains.

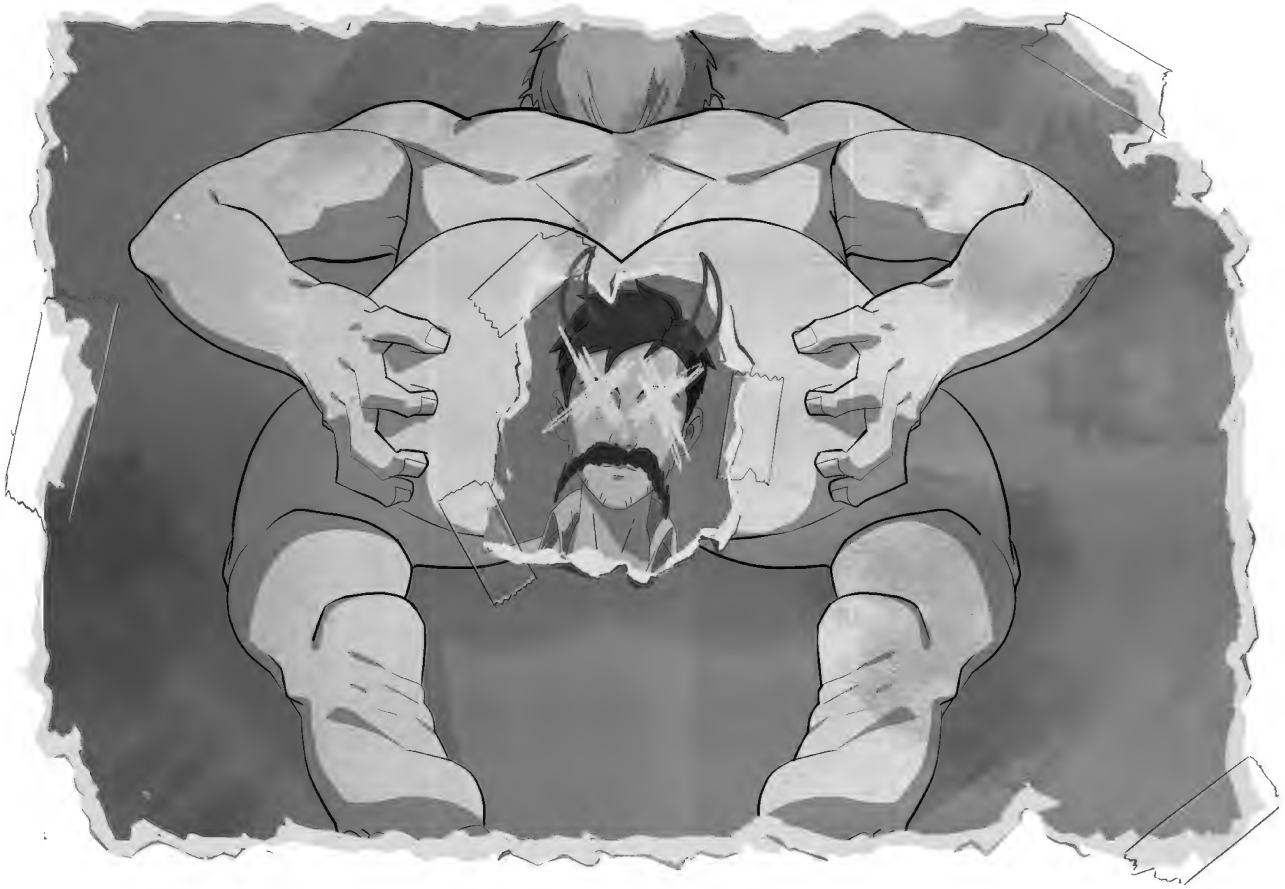
LEFT: *Lap Pun Cheung*
RIGHT: *Lab concepts by Santasak Apasuthirat & Tana.M*

In-game screenshot from Episode 4

THE SETTING: PROPS & BRANDING

A world with superheroes and villains is a world that allows for a lot of fantastical elements to exist... but most of the props we encounter as a dispatcher in an office are pretty mundane. Regardless, they are all rendered with the same level of care and attention to detail so they maintain the same aesthetic, whether it be a mystical power-infused sword or a dog poop bag.

TOP: *Props by Tawan Leong, Rujathorn Sopradist, Sirawich Jitsupa, Jantanut Chuntossaponchai, Achitapol Chaiwian, Warayut Kerdsuwan, Tanchanok Aramrung* | ***BOTTOM:*** *Terminal exploration by Derek Stratton*



A FUNNY SAFETY POSTER

B SPORT GYM VIBE

LEFT: *Photocopy prank art by Warumporn Laoprakitchaloenporn, jojaow & Tana.M*
RIGHT: *Gym posters by Thanyathon Srimahasarn*

LEFT: *Billboard exploration by Non & Note; Fragrance ad mock-up by Thanyathon Srimahasarn & Tana.M* **|** ***RIGHT:*** *Billboard tone piece by Lap Pun Cheung* **|** ***BOTTOM:*** *Street buildings & branding by Alin Krisadapiniharn*

City street set design by Santasak Apasuthirat

DISPATCHING

It took several revisions of the dispatching software and main gameplay screens to land on what you see in the game. The goal was to evoke the retro-vibes of cathode-ray tube monitors to blur time-period aesthetics and subtly suggest that SDN may not be quite as well-funded as they'd hope. But for the sake of the player's (your!) experience, the UI had to be exceptionally user-friendly to reduce the learning curve.

TOP (3): *Dispatch screen exploration by John Montenegro*

BOTTOM (3): *Dispatch screen exploration by Robyn Wadey*

UX CHALLENGES

Dispatch presented a lot of usability challenges due to the amount of information displayed at once. In these initial concepts, you can see the exploration of different locations for the hero cards. We opted to go with the horizontal format because it allows players to see our beautiful art better.

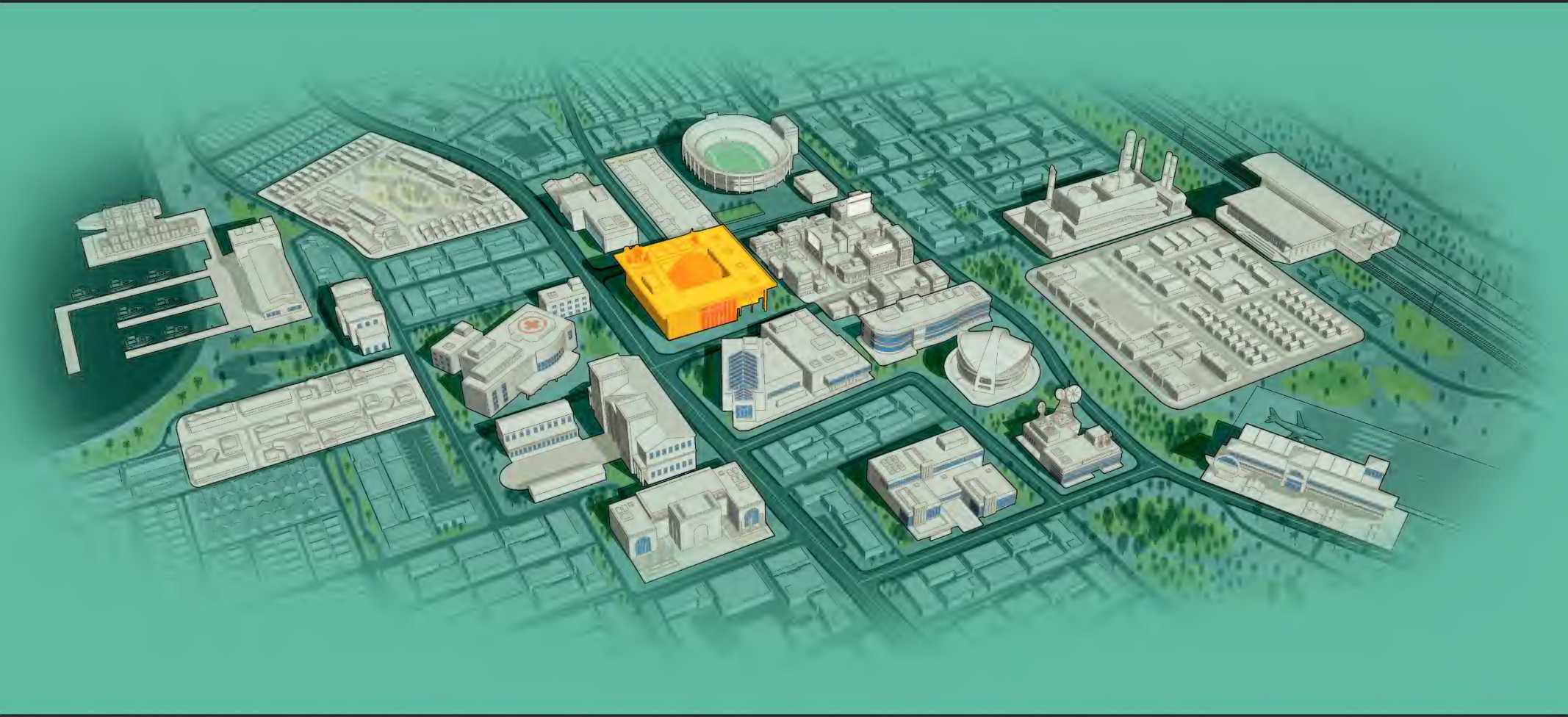
THE MAP EVOLUTION

The map went through a few phases before it ended up in the monochromatic display you see in-game. In collaboration with Polly Raguimov (Narrative Designer and resident Torrance-expert), I created a map mock-up with Torrance locations and 3D models (*left*). The concept was then taken by our animation partner and refined into a saturated sprawl (*right*).

UI COLOR PROCESS

The UI's original warm colors and blocky details leaned more 70s before we moved to cooler tones and pixelated details. This was done to match the Dispatch CPU's functionality for dispatching heroes while also being able to hack subscriber's security systems.

— Robyn Wadey
Senior UX/UI Artist



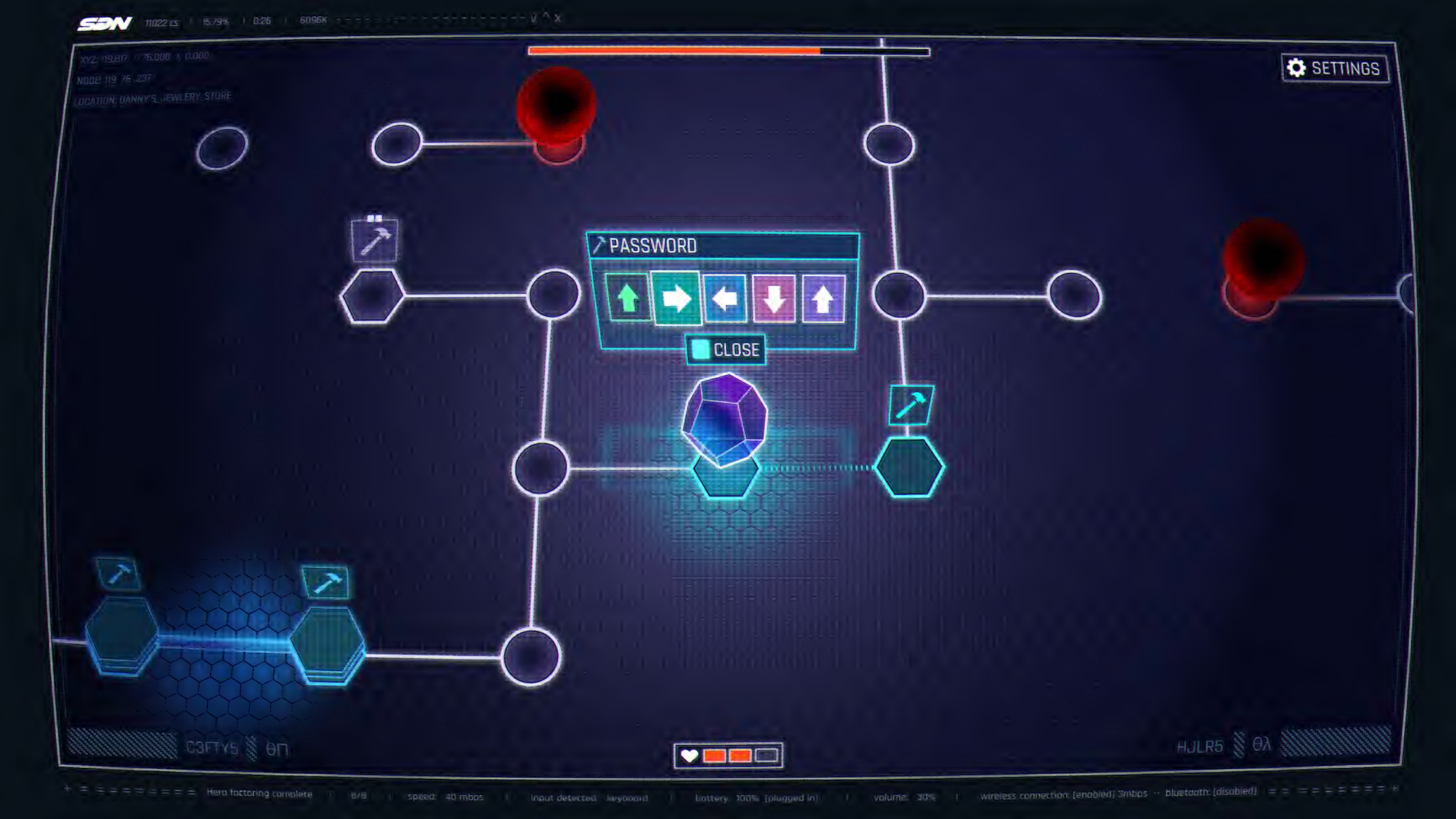
Close-up of the Torrance dispatching map by Tanakorn Srisombat

HACKING

The basics of the hacking mode were blocked out in Unreal Engine, but the default gray orbs just weren't cutting it, surprisingly enough. We love where it landed, but it's equally cool to see the range and nuance of our experimentations on orb & virus icons, and how those designs might have influenced how each moved and navigated the hacking grid.

Hacking node & anti-virus design explorations by Robyn Wadey

NEXT PAGE: *Hacking mode design by Robyn Wadey*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11022 cs
15.79%
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SETTINGS
PASSWORD
CLOSE
C3FTY5
θΠ
HJLR5
θλ
Hero factoring complete
8/8
speed: 40 mbps
input detected: keyboard
battery: 100% (plugged in)
volume: 30%
wireless connection: (enabled) 3mbps
bluetooth: (disabled)

The opening sequence of Robert getting ready for work at the top of Episode 4 wasn't in the script, but was added in during development to underline how not-super Robert is feeling at this point in the story. I wanted to have one shot in the sequence that could stand on its own, where even in just one frame, you would understand what he was going through. This is the result.

- Nick Herman
Episode 4 Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 4

EPISODE THREE *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

EPISODE FOUR *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

THE ART OF DISPATCH

CHAPTER 3

Ever since the storyboard phase this shot has been one of my favorites. Because of Robert's downfall at the beginning of the series, it's rare that we get to see him in his prime. Being able to show him in his full glory as Mecha Man was an opportunity we couldn't take for granted. The strength of his pose, the way he's framed so well by the gaping hole he just created, cool and composed, fighting the good fight even as the world burns around him - that's Mecha Man. That's Robert down to his core. He may not have super powers, but he's got guts and grit, and that's ultimately why we love him as our protagonist.

- Chris Rebbert
Episode 5 Co-Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 5

Z-TEAM
continued

Sketches by Paige Irvine

FLAMBAE

Certified hottie. Controls the fire and the flame, but his temper? He's working on it...

Flambae needed to be loud, both in personality and in visual design. Fun fact: his name was originally Blonde Blazer, due to his "matchstick head." When his design changed, we transferred the name to someone more fitting.

Sketches by Jae Harm, Paige Irvine and Thanyathon Srimahasarn

ORANGE SUIT

ABOVE: *Sketches by Lance Lee* **|** ***RIGHT:*** *Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung*

Synergy sketch by jojaow

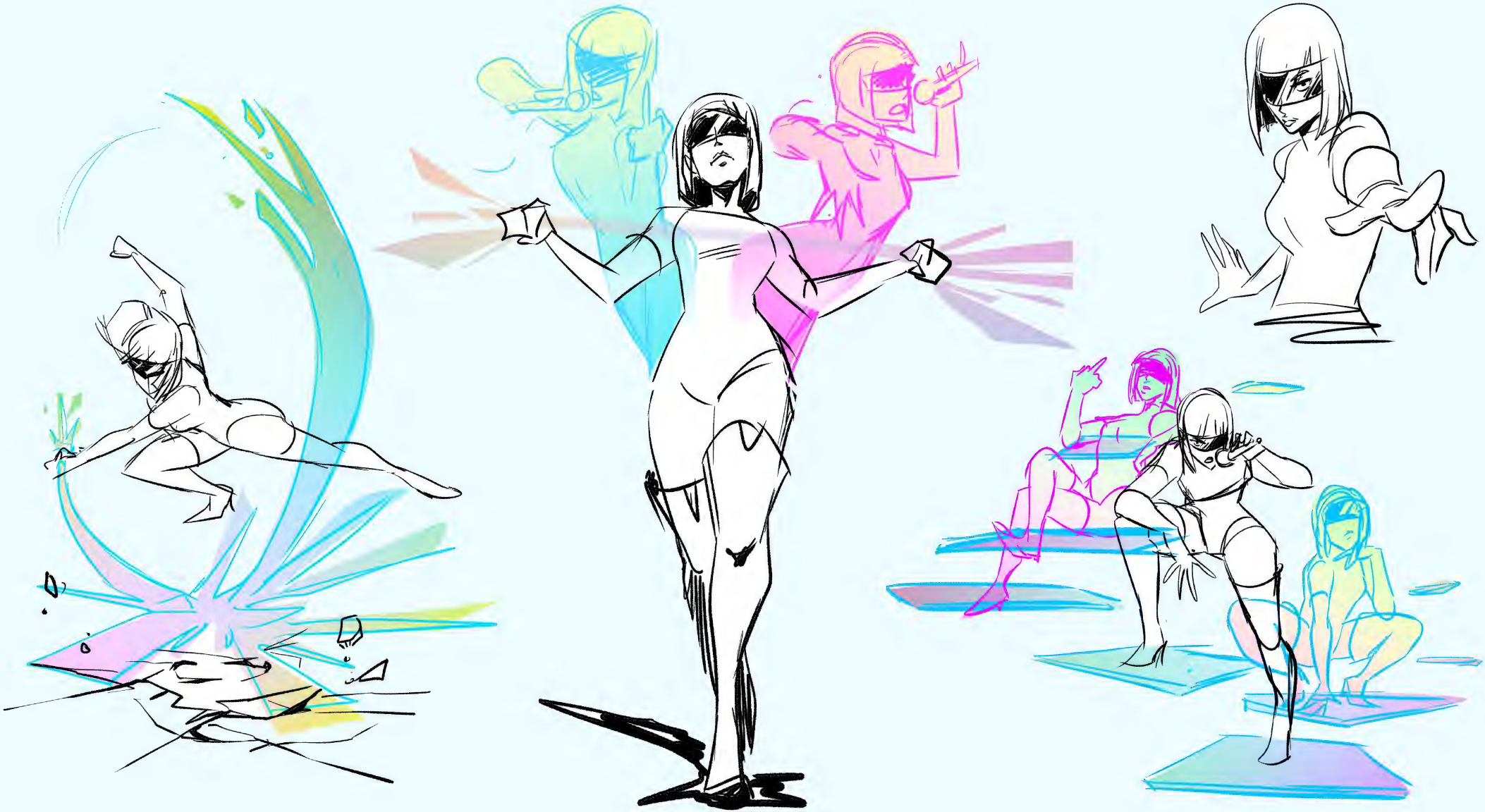
PRISM

We had the early idea of a light / laser powered-hero but we weren't quite sure the best way to represent her visually. We went through the ***scientific manipulation of particles*** phase...

then the ***supernatural conjuring of lightning*** phase...

and finally landed on ***pop-diva putting on a lethal laser show with holographic back-up dancers.***
So obvious.

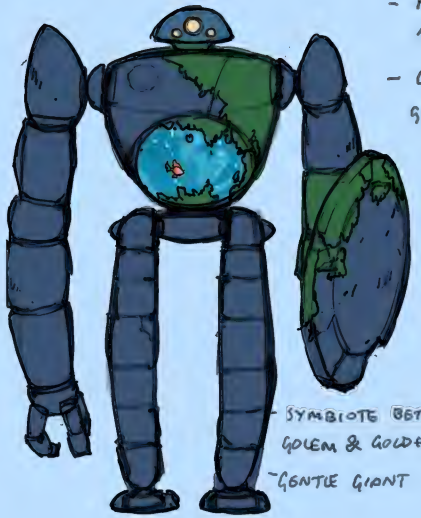
Sketches by Lap Pun Cheung & Derek Stratton



Sketches by Jae Harm

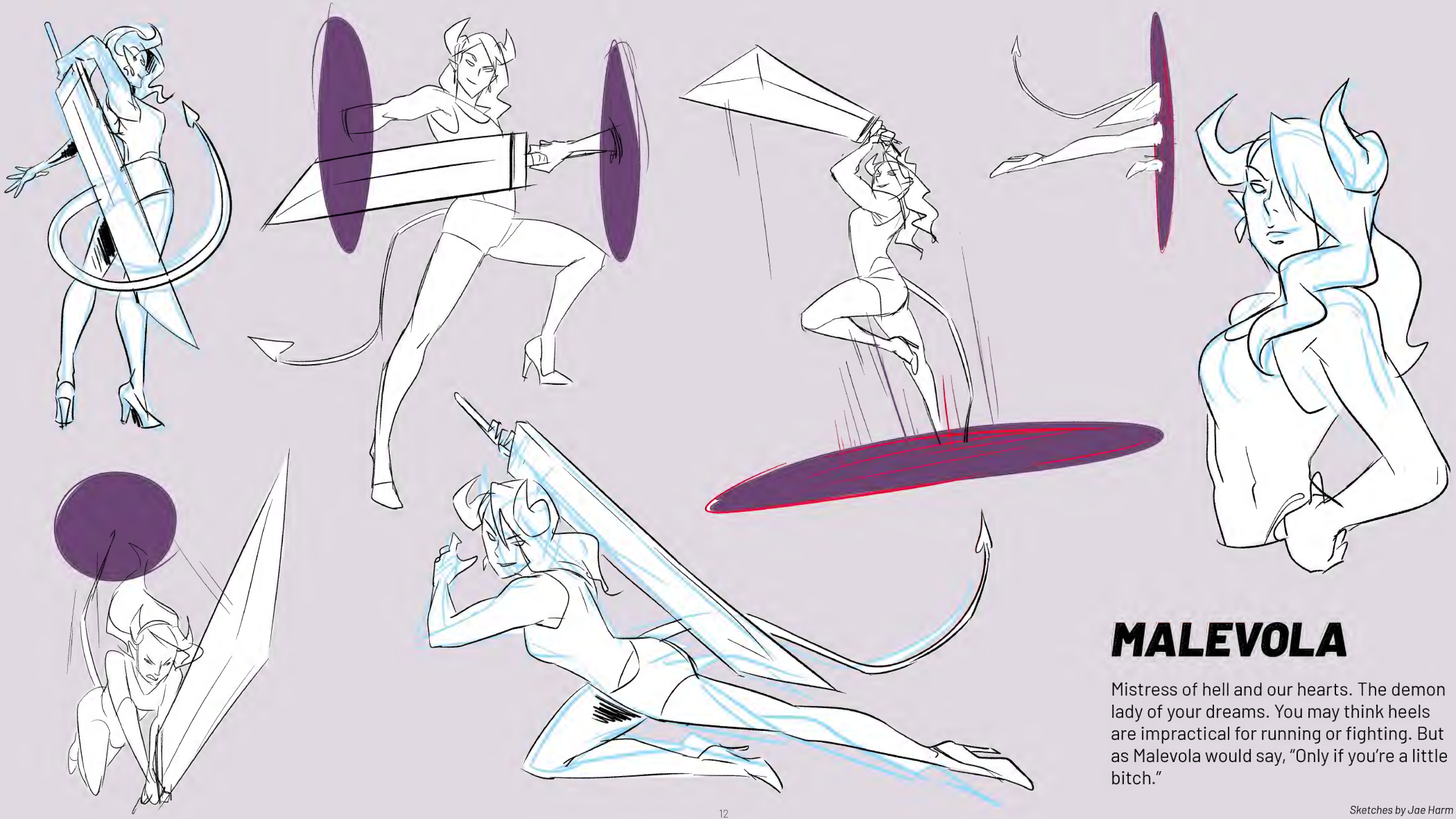
GOLEM

When a character is a sentient creature made of dirt and clay, it allows for a lot of design possibilities... in our opinion, too many. Golem was a character we spent a long time iterating on to get just right. Think he's just some glob guy? Think again! Check these receipts.



PREVIOUS PAGE: *Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung*
THIS PAGE: *Sketches by Jae Harm, Federico Kempke & Lance Lee*

In-game screenshot from Episode 5



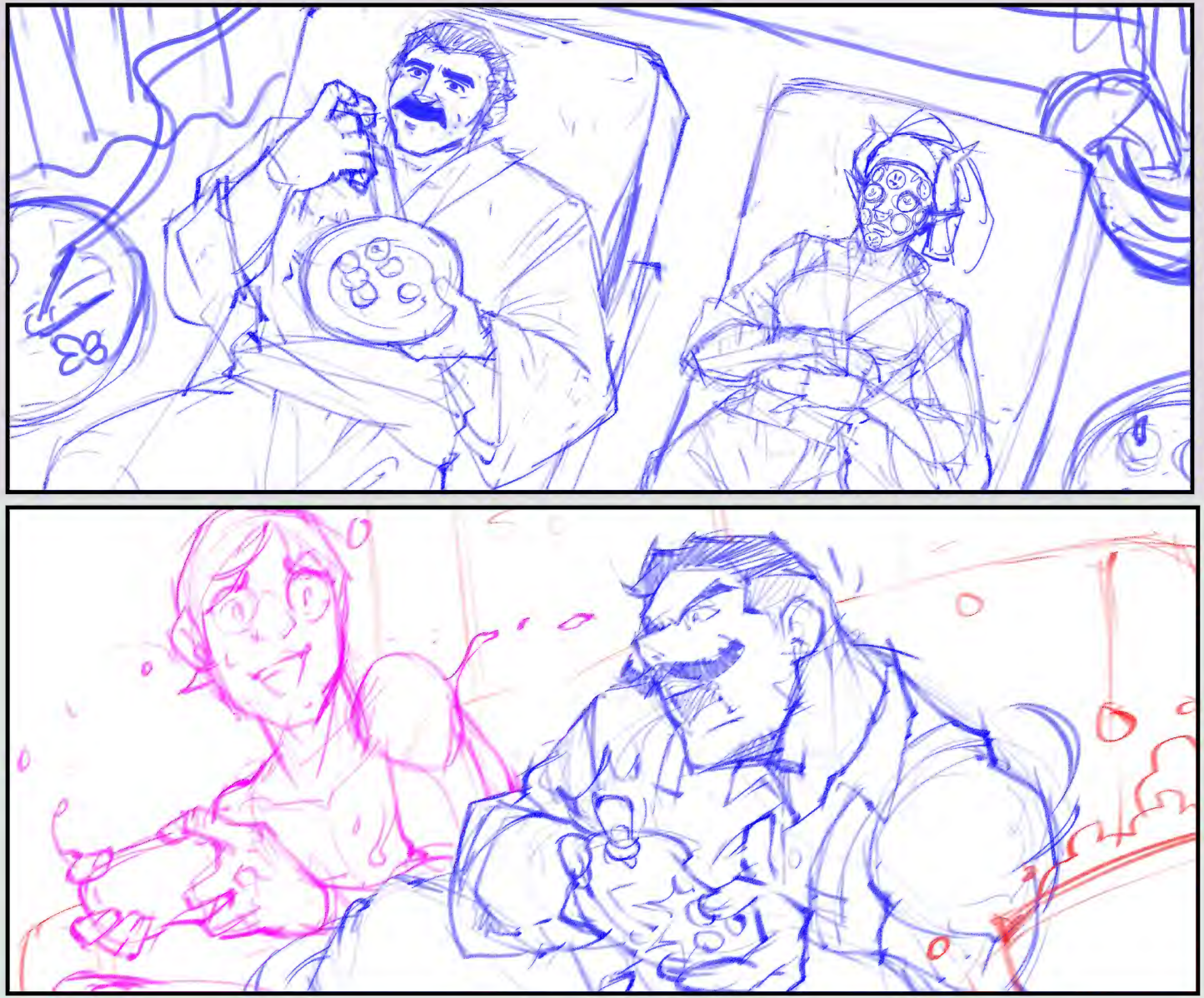
MALEVOLA

Mistress of hell and our hearts. The demon lady of your dreams. You may think heels are impractical for running or fighting. But as Malevola would say, “Only if you’re a little bitch.”

Sketches by Jae Harm

While Malevola's strong build was always part of our vision for her, the weapon she wielded and her personal aesthetic evolved quite a bit throughout development. We tried leaning fantasy, gothic, aquatic, alien... but surprisingly, the version we loved best was more supermodel-glam, with a vibe that may remind you of a certain Pepsi commercial from the early 90s.

Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung



Synergy sketches by IAMZOOF

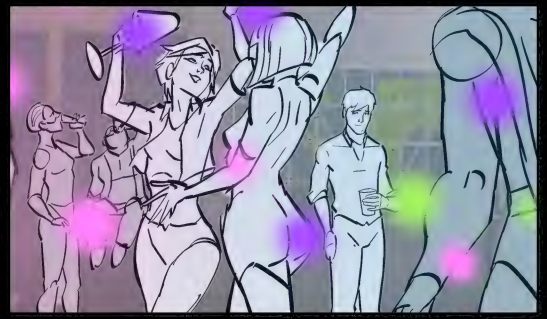
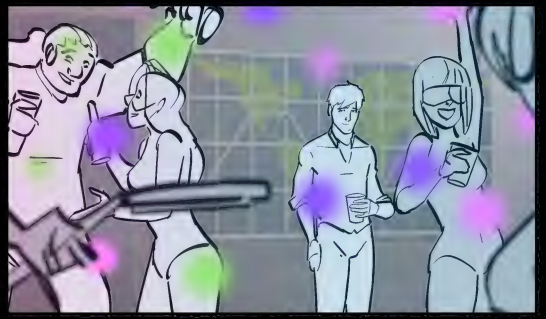
PUNCH UP

Punch Up came from a carnival strongman concept, but he got progressively shorter throughout our design exploration process.

No nuts are safe.

FAR LEFT: *Concepts by Derek Stratton*
CENTER & RIGHT: *Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung*

Sketches by Thanyathon Srimahasarn, Federico Kempke & Jae Harm

Episode 6 storyboards by Mike Jones

THE SETTING: THE CITY

Our SDN branch is set in a real city in Southern California: Torrance! So, a lot of the streets, buildings, maps, and other geographical elements are based on actual locations. Pulling and synthesizing real-world references not only provides endless inspiration from a design perspective, but it also hopefully brings a feeling of authenticity to the areas you see within the game world.

Villain Bar exterior by jojaow

THE VILLAIN BAR

Seedy dive bar (loosely inspired by a great, *real* dive bar in Torrance, The Sardine!) We wanted it to contrast the Crypto Night (Hero) bar from Episode One, which was cleaner and warmer with soft light and wood tones. Here, we've got concrete, tacky murals, supers' costumes that have been stabbed onto the wall like trophies, and bathrooms tagged up the wazoo. Somehow, it gets even shittier post-brawl.

View from Robert's balcony by Thanyathon Srimahasarn

Flashback battleground exterior by jojaow

FLASHBACK BATTLE

In Episode 5, we get a few brief glimpses of a previous battle between Robert, in his prime Mecha Man years, and Flambae. The battle is fiery, literally and figuratively, and the setting had to reflect the raw carnage inflicted by this showdown. It also had to directly contrast with the current-day gym setting we bounce to between flashbacks. If the gym is cold, internal tension, the plaza featured here is dramatic, external violence: warmth, high contrast, intense shadows. We took visual inspiration from Westside Pavilion mall, a nice local homage to the game's setting that also gave us that visual contrast we needed for the cross-cutting.

STEEL MILL

Back in Episode 1, Robert faced off against his nemesis, Shroud, in a battle that took place in an abandoned steel mill. The vibe and some of the layout was based on the Kaiser Steel Mill, which was used in killer action films like *Terminator 2* and *Mission Impossible 3*, so there was a lot of helpful, cinematic reference to pull from. We also liked the idea of paying homage to an iconic real world filming location, even though we were building it from the ground up in 3D.

Steel mill exterior by Thanyathon Srimahasarn & jojaow

GRANNY may not be a villain per se but he certainly didn't make Robert's first shift with the Z-Team any easier. Even though he plays a relatively small role in the season, Granny and his donut shop were in the earliest prototype we ever built for *Dispatch*, many years ago. | *Concepts by Lih Liau & Lap Pun Cheung.*

LIGHTNINGSTRUCK is a lower-tier baddie who was also in our earliest prototype. He started off more militaristic & techy but eventually evolved to into some bored guy who happened to get his hands on some decent tech by selling his soul to the Red Ring. | *Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung.*

VILLAINS

No, not reformed criminals like our Z-Team, but the real-deal villains. The bad-guy roster can range from overpowered to "is that...is that really considered a superpower?" and that's a fun spectrum to play within.

Check out the designs of some of these dummies.

THE SKITTLE THIEVES, remember these assholes? With some perspective on the other villains that exist in this world, we have context for how low on the rung these idiots are, and what a new low it was for Robert to get his ass beat by 'em. | *Concepts by Thanyathon Srimahasarn & Fridea_18.*

ROTSPUR was an early concept that we had to include based on design alone. Not many dead guys can pull off three belts, and *that body*! If you've got it, flaunt it. Er... what's left of it. | *Concept by Thanyathon Srimahasarn.*

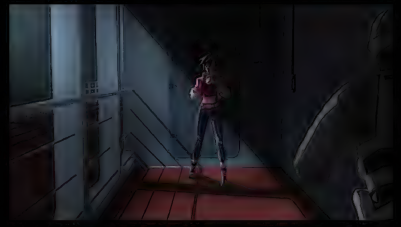
STRETCHY GOON loses some points for lack of name creativity, but he is a funky weirdo: icky and sticky to fight. Also won't stop asking you to come to his punk rock band's show (cover songs only) at the Sardine. | *Concept by jojaow.*

This whole sequence was truly a labor of love for me. It's rare that we get to exercise such purely visual storytelling, so when we got the chance here I knew I wanted to go all out and make something special. I wanted the player to feel like they were actually at the party, not just seeing snippets like a more traditional montage. It was a blast deciding on the details, from the lamps each Z-teamer brought to each one's dance moves. What starts as a ruse to trace the whereabouts of the Astral Pulse turns into an all out lovefest, and Robert's dark, empty apartment is suddenly filled with light and the people he cares about. For me, it's the emotional highlight of the episode, if not the series, and I never get sick of watching our cast share one pure moment of elation.

- Chris Rebbert
Episode 6 Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 6

EPISODE FIVE *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*



EPISODE SIX *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

THE ART OF DISPATCH

CHAPTER 4

When I was working on this beat, we had yet to shoot Shroud's earlier scenes in Episodes 1 or 6 (non-linear development), so I approached it as his big reveal. I wanted his entrance to feel unsettling, like a nightmare. To build that effect, we established a rhythm where quick flashes of Robert being tortured were surrounded by long cuts to black, providing a "safe space." Then we shattered that safety by having Shroud emerge from the darkness itself, leaving the audience to wonder if he had been there the whole time.

- Nick Herman
Episode 7 Director

In-game screenshot from Episode 7

SHROUD

The amount of design exploration we did for Shroud could fill its own art book. His look, mech & powers all required nuance and specificity, to properly represent his backstory and convey his ultimate motive. As you can see, we traveled down a few paths before we narrowed it down to what's on screen.

Sketches by Lap Pun Cheung

We started by throwing a very wide design net: is Shroud armored, bio-based, organic and tentacled, pharaoh-inspired, non-corporeal, cybernetic, ninja-like, brainy business baddie?

Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung

Then we landed **here**.

This was the right vibe, but we had to further refine his helmet/mask, as that piece of tech was essential to understanding Shroud's capabilities and threat.

His helmet allows him to calculate probabilities and increase his odds of winning to unbeatable proportions. Almost like he can **see** into the future.

Which brought us here. Functional attire with an iconic and creepy headpiece, paired with a sub-dermal neural network; both of which ominously glow with immense processing power.

Concepts by Derek Stratton

ELI

When the Shroud mask is off, he's just "Eli." Turns out, Eli is also a dick.

He worked closely with Robert's Dad during Mecha Man's golden years, but was unable to buy into the vision of heroism being a worthwhile pursuit.

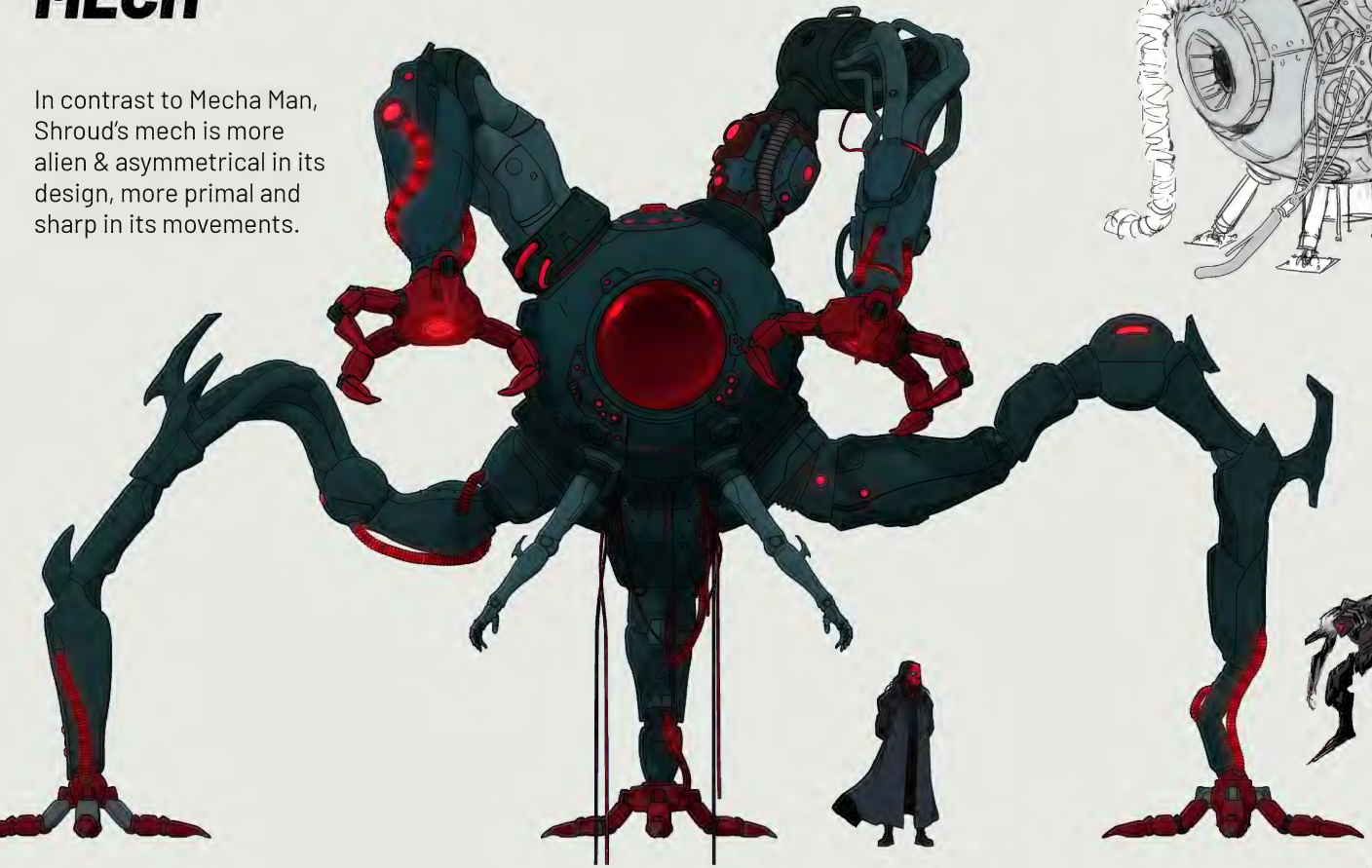
These concepts show only a small handful of the many revs of exploration we did to find Shroud's behind-the-mask persona. At one point we even explored the idea of flashing back to a young Eli, to see his dynamic with young Robert and Bobby.

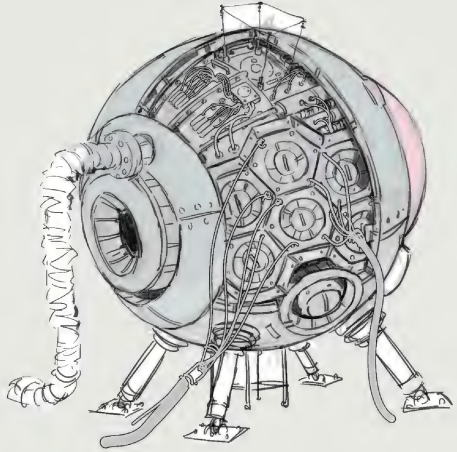
Concepts by Lap Pun Cheung

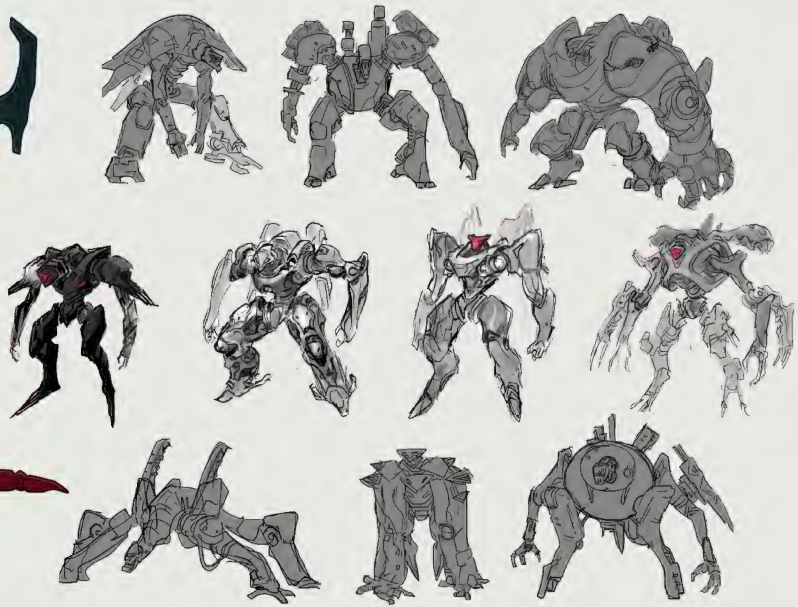
Visual Development of Shroud's Mech by Derek Stratton

SHROUD'S MECH

In contrast to Mecha Man, Shroud's mech is more alien & asymmetrical in its design, more primal and sharp in its movements.

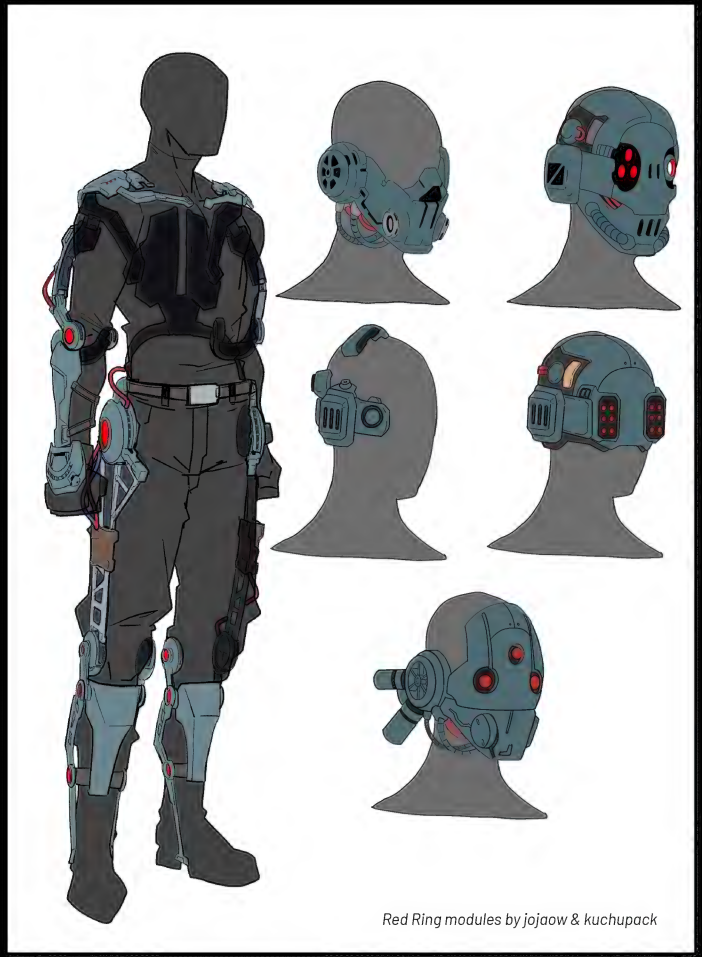




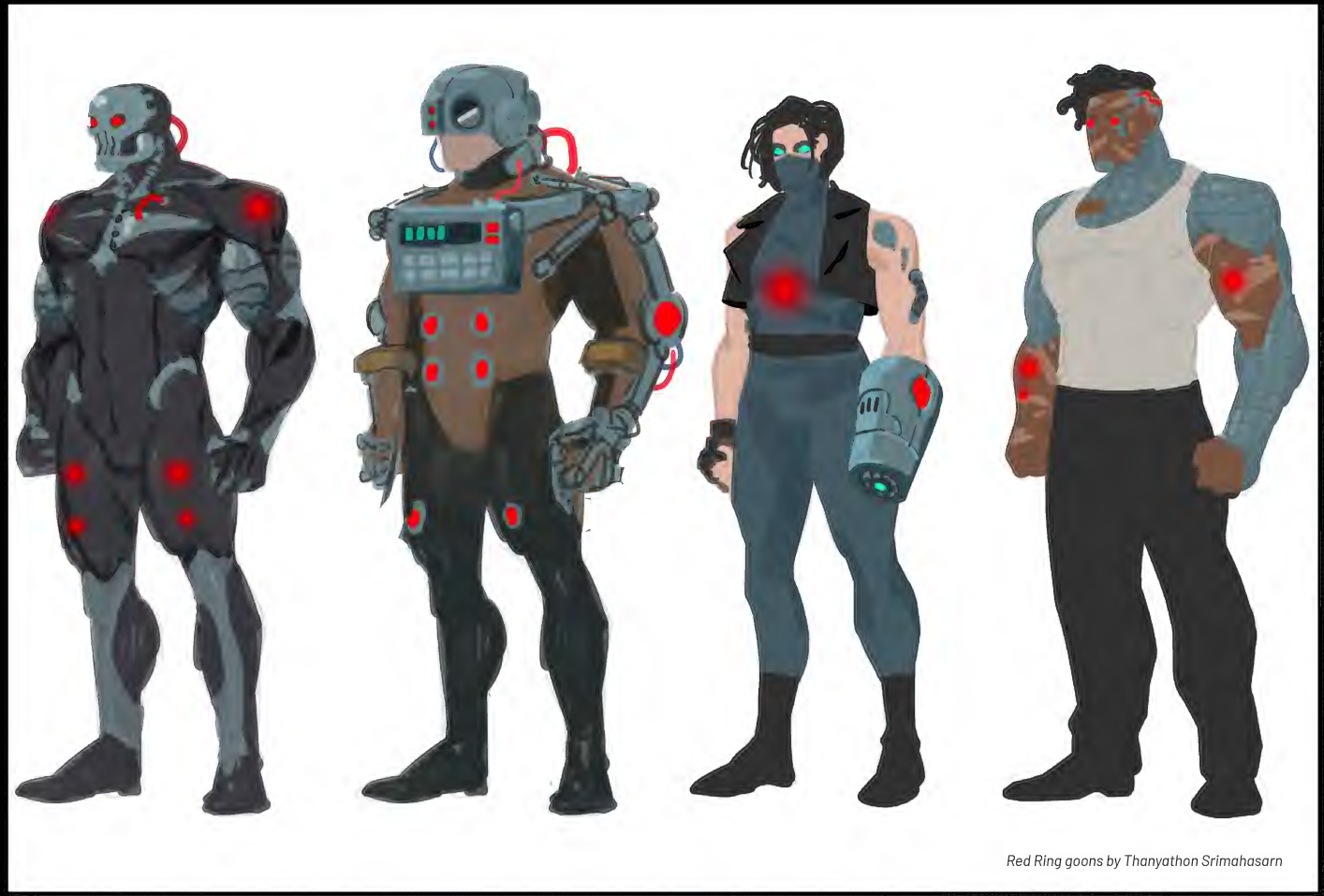


ABOVE: *Mech concept by Derek Stratton*
TOP RIGHT: *Mech pieces by Thanyathon Srimahasarn & jojaow*

Mech design explorations by kuchupack



Red Ring modules by jojaow & kuchupack



Red Ring goons by Thanyathon Srimahasarn

THE RED RING

Group fights are expensive to produce with so many unique characters, but we needed these villains to feel threatening, not like nameless assets.

Our solution was to create a "kit" of body types and Red Ring augments that could be mixed and matched.

This saved our animation partners the headache of starting from scratch each time we filled out a scene.

We also documented how the abilities of these bad guys and gals would be enhanced by their respective Red Ring augments.

SONAR'S juiced up collar was designed to feel reminiscent of the bulky tech you'd see in an 80's sci-fi movie, yet still fit in with the Red Ring DIY-aesthetic. | *"Sonar Appears" by NemoDecy.*

COUPÉ'S mask and wings are both glowing hot red. It's partly due to the rage felt from Robert's betrayal, but also the increased Red Ring power; she's faster, sharper, and a heck of a lot scarier. | *"Coupé Appears" by NemoDecy.*

PSYCHIC may feel particularly specific in her design and that's because it was originally intended for a Z-Team member that got cut. | *Concept by Lap Pun Cheung & Niti Promathet.*

TOXIC is made of toxic sludge and has a real shit attitude to match. When he transforms, his clothes are burned off from the acid to reveal his cool cucumber. | *Concept by Niti Promathet.*

THUMBSTICK doesn't get the chance to live up to his rep but we still had to design him *as if* he was a menacing dude. | *Concept by Tana.M.*

BLOB GOON may look kinda cute, maybe even friendly, but he sucks. Or rather, blows? ...Like blows up. We're trying too hard here, but you get it. He's a blob and he's a jerk. | *Concepts & Model by Niti Promathet, Chaloemphon Phaisanphukkun & Vitawin Diloksambandh.*

ARMSTRONG started out with a basic silhouette: large, imposing and top-heavy. We then gave him tiny arms because, well it was a funny contrast with his name. But more importantly, it strengthened the narrative that he's reliant on Red Ring's augmented mechanical ligaments. | *Concept by jojaow.*

Z-TEAM & THE FINAL FIGHT

The Z-Team got scrappy in the bar brawl back in Episode 5, but it's not until the boss battle at the end of Episode 8 that we see them show off their full power kits; some even discover perfect synergy with a bud in a wombo-combo move.

The first step was to take stock of all their respective powers, then brainstorm the most interesting and entertaining ways they could work together.

Next, we board out the scenes to understand the flow and communicate the scope and vision to the rest of the team. Now, boarding action beats ain't the prettiest... In order to convey lots of tiny kinetic movements, it's fast and messy. Detailed visuals take a back seat to informational sketches & notes, often paired with 3D pre-visualization and live action reference material filmed by our team.

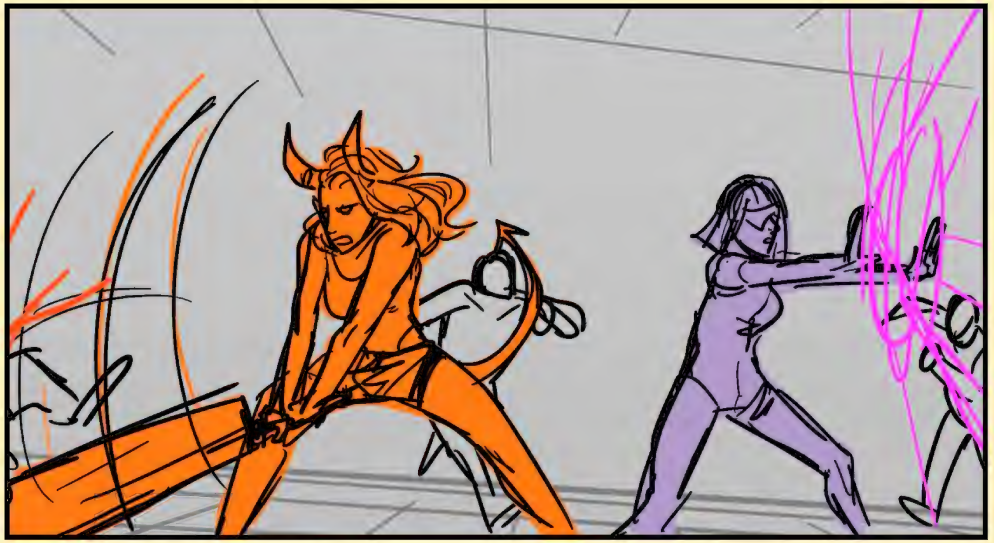
This is how we worked out these combat shots and found the right pacing, so our ragtag team could finally step into their roles as full-blown ***superheroes***.

PRISM'S *light lattice shield concept by Thanyathon Srimahasarn & Tana.M*

MALEVOLA'S *strength and sword synergy concept by Tana.M*

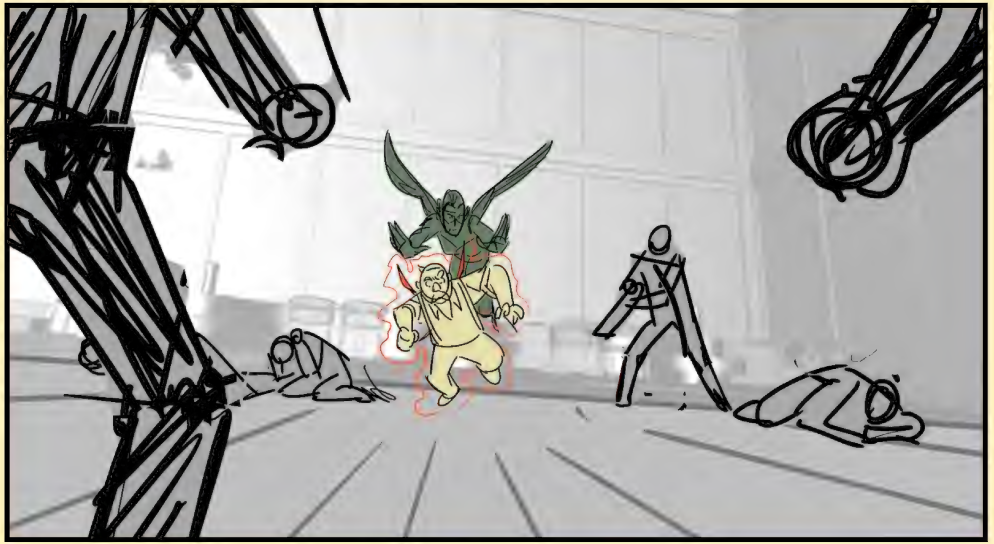
GOLEM'S *rock summoning waterfall power concept by Tana.M*

Z-TEAM *assembles against a common enemy. | Board by Federico Kempke*

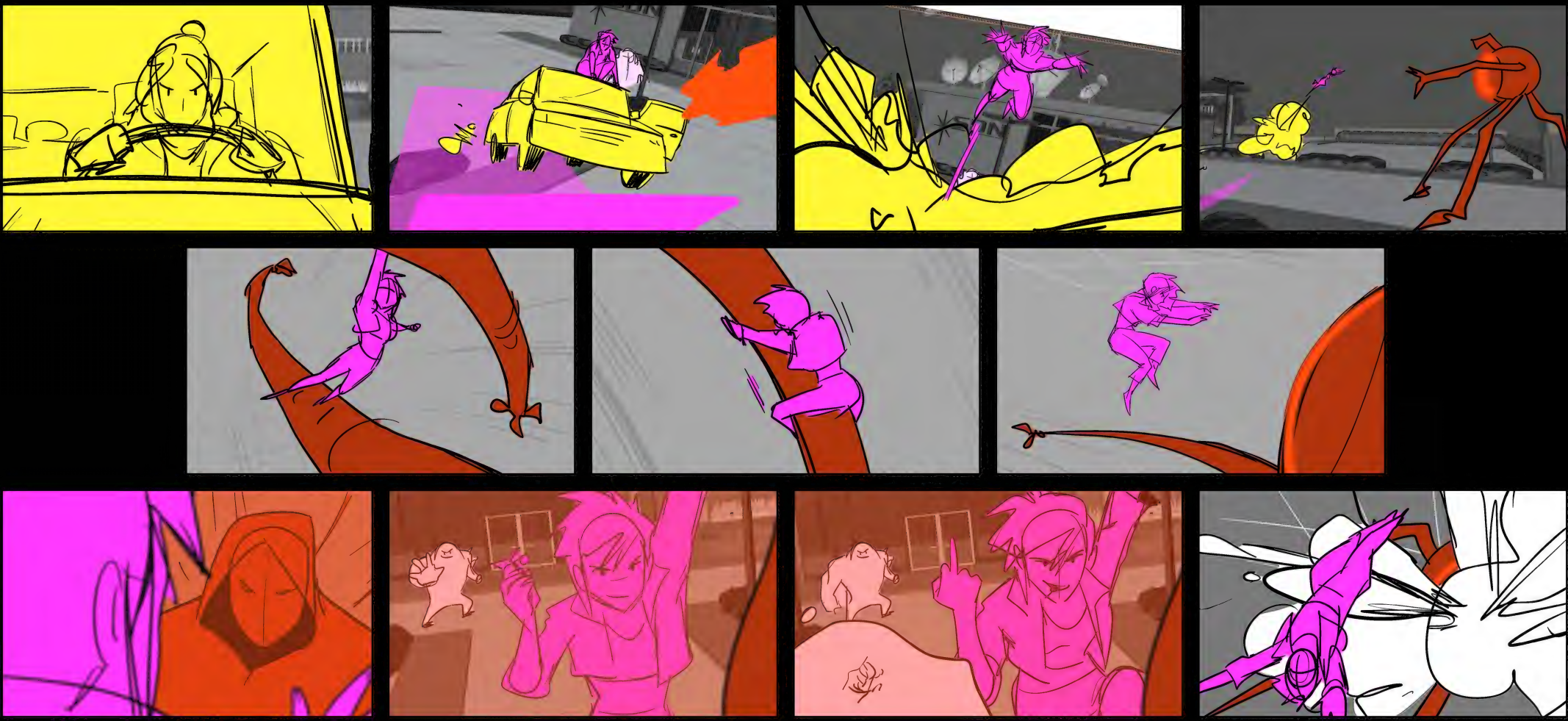


MALEVOLA *portals in to watch* ***PRISM'S*** *back. | Board by Federico Kempke*

PRISM *gears up to conjure light-steps for a* ***FLAMBAE*** *alley-oop. | Board by Alejandra Wiechers*



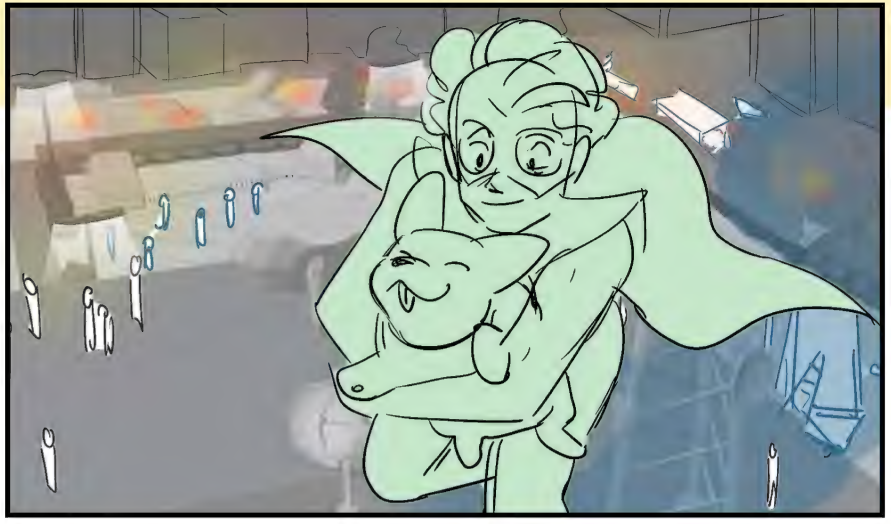
COUPÉ *gives* ***PUNCH UP*** *some altitude before he barrel-rolls. | Board by Lih Liau*



***INVISIGAL** blows up yet another mech, this time with the help of **GOLEM**'s mud goop. | Boards by Jae Harm*

BLAZIN'

If you didn't already know from your choices in Episode 4, it may be a shock to learn Blazer isn't a natural blonde (be cool, it's a sensitive topic.) Turns out the best balayage doesn't come from a salon, but an enchanted necklace that brings along some serious super-prowess — all of which Chase benefits from once he dons the gemstone.



LEFT: *Mandy & Starblazer sketches by Thanyathon Srimahasarn*
ABOVE: *Episode 8 storyboard by Jae Harm*

Pre & post Red Ring attack set designs by jojaow, kuchupack, Tana.M & Chutaros Phumdokmai

THE SETTING: THE ATTACKS

By Episode 7, our team is exhausted & beaten down. When the Red Ring launches a widespread attack on the greater Los Angeles area, we needed the scale of the destruction to feel both overwhelming and personal. We continued to base a lot of the game locations on real-life locales, to echo that sense of familiarity and personal loss.

PREVIOUS PAGE: *City sketches by jojaow & Thanyathon Srimahasarn*
THIS PAGE: *City sketch by jojaow*

THE PEOPLE

We've got what makes the real difference — great people.

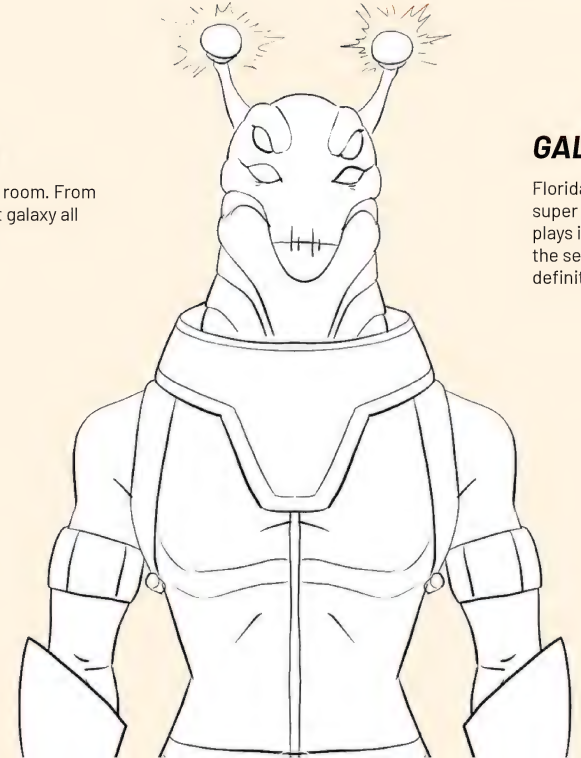
The chaos of the Red Ring's attack in our story forces us to zoom out a bit. We get a better idea of the scale of the city, as well as the citizens, other heroes, and SDN employees within it.

MR. WHISKEY

Makes the best cup of joe in the office.

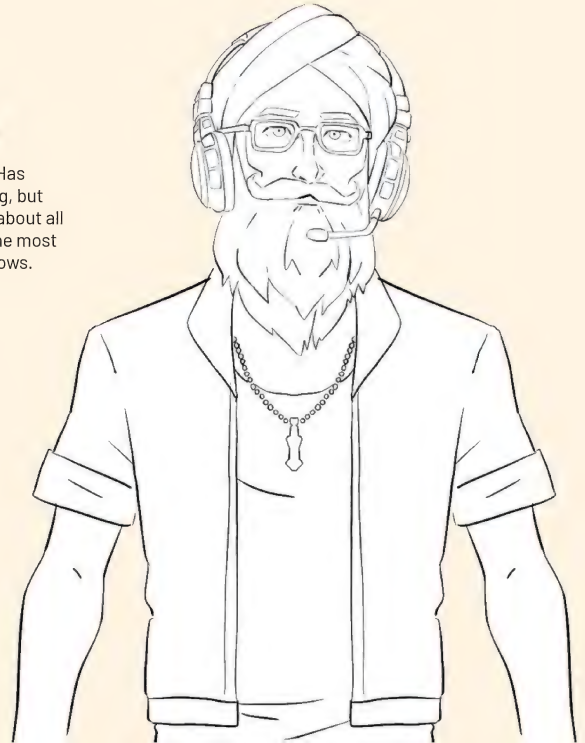
LANA

Alien. Mail room. From a different galaxy all together.



GALEN

Florida guy. Has super hearing, but plays it cool about all the secrets he most definitely knows.



ABOVE: *Banged up Mr. Whiskey concept by Thanyathon Srimahasarn*
RIGHT: *Gameplay portrait sketches by jojaow*

Episode 8 storyboards by Federico Kempke

Modular civilian, SDN employee & superhero designs by Lap Pun Cheung

FLASHBACK

Episode 7 begins with a flashback to a sweet moment between young Robert and young Chase, giving us some context to their life-long friendship.

This sequence was sadly scoped down a bit. While the content was hard to lose, all that ground work helped flesh out their backstories and inform how our characters got to where they are now.

Robert's childhood home circa 2003 by Chutaros Phumdokmai

Young Chase explorations by Thanyathon Srimahasarn

Young Robert explorations by jojaow

PREVIOUS PAGE: *In-game screenshot from Episode 7*

A sweet photo of Young Robert with his dad, by jojaow

Alternate photo sketch of Young Robert & his dad by Tana.M

These unlikely heroes who started out as individual, disparate sketches drawn over the course of several years, eventually grew into the untitled cast lineup seen here.

At first, it was hard to picture them together, but now it's impossible to imagine them apart. Their unique designs echos their specific personalities: like Flambae intentionally choosing the extremely deep cut V neck of his suit to show off his chest hair, or Waterboy wearing a wetsuit in-order to keep the water inside his clothes so as not to upset the world around him.

Each of these characters came from different backgrounds, with different talents and temperaments. They were plucked from their normal lives and smashed together in the workplace. While learning how to work together they often joked around, occasionally argued, always celebrated wins together, and ultimately ended up supporting each other when things got tough. And over the course of working together, they became a team. Just like the group of developers that made Dispatch.

Dennis Lenart
Episode 8 Co-Direction

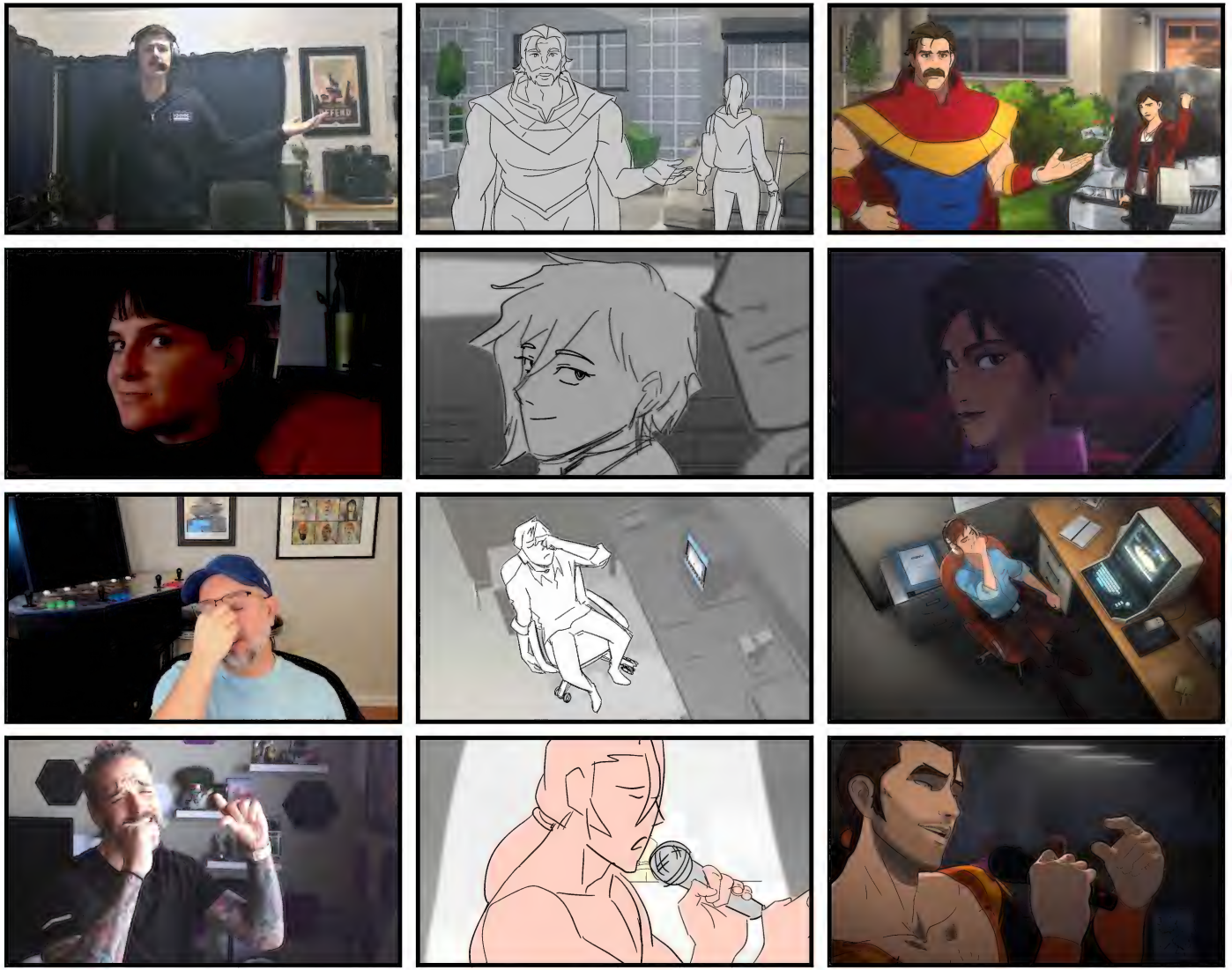
In game screenshot from Episode 8

EPILOGUE

Well, this is the end. The process of creating this book, of digging up all of these concept pieces and development notes, was a nice reminder of how far we've come. Making this game was sometimes beautiful, often frustrating, but always interesting. Hopefully reading through this digital documentation of our journey was interesting for you as well.

Speaking of you... we couldn't have done any of this without you! The curiosity, excitement, and support we received from you, the players, is why this game can exist at all. So thanks for playing, thanks for reading, and thanks for Dispatching.

18 ADHOC STUDIO



Sometimes we film reference in order to convey performance details.

EPISODE SEVEN *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

EPISODE EIGHT *Color Key by Natthapa Chansamakr*

THE ART OF DISPATCH

ADHOC STUDIO

Meredith Ainsworth
Erin Ashe
Mayanna Berrin
Bruno Cecconi
Michael Choung
Teunis De Raat
Austen Gralheer
Natalie Herman
Nick Herman
Seth Kingsley
Ashley Jeffalone
Anastasiia Kovaleva
Dennis Lenart
Danny MacIntyre
Charles Marcolim
Suzee Matson
Aniket Natekar
Ranger Norton
James Osborne
Ralph Pineda
Polly Raguimov
Chris Rebbert
Chad Rhiness
Brett Rogstad
Pierre Shorette
Lucas Steele
Derek Stratton
Katherine Turner
Rudi Vanzin
Tikva Velazquez
Robyn Wadey
Kiera Williams

FEATURED ARTISTS

Santasak Apasuthirat
Tanchanok Aramrung
Achitapol Chaiwian
Natthapa Chansamakr
Liz Chee
Lap Pun Cheung
Jirakiat Chuaduangpui
Jantanut Chuntossaponchai
Vitawin Diloksambandh
Fridea_18
Jae Harm
IAMZOOF
Paige Irvine
Kanako Iwata
Sirawich Jitsupa
jojaow
Mike Jones
Federico Kempke
Warayut Kerdsuwan
Alin Krisadapiniharn
kuchupack
Warumporn Laoprakitchaloenporn
Lance D. Lee
Tawan Leong
Lih Liau
Tana.M
John Montenegro
NemoDecy
Alexandria Neonakis
Non
Note
Chaloemphon Phaisanphukkun
Chutaros Phumdokmai
Niti Promathet
Debra Rengga
Rujathorn Sopradist
Thanyathon Srimahasarn
Tanakorn Srisombat
Derek Stratton
Natpakhan Temrung
Tanapon Wachirakul
Robyn Wadey
Alejandra Wiechers

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